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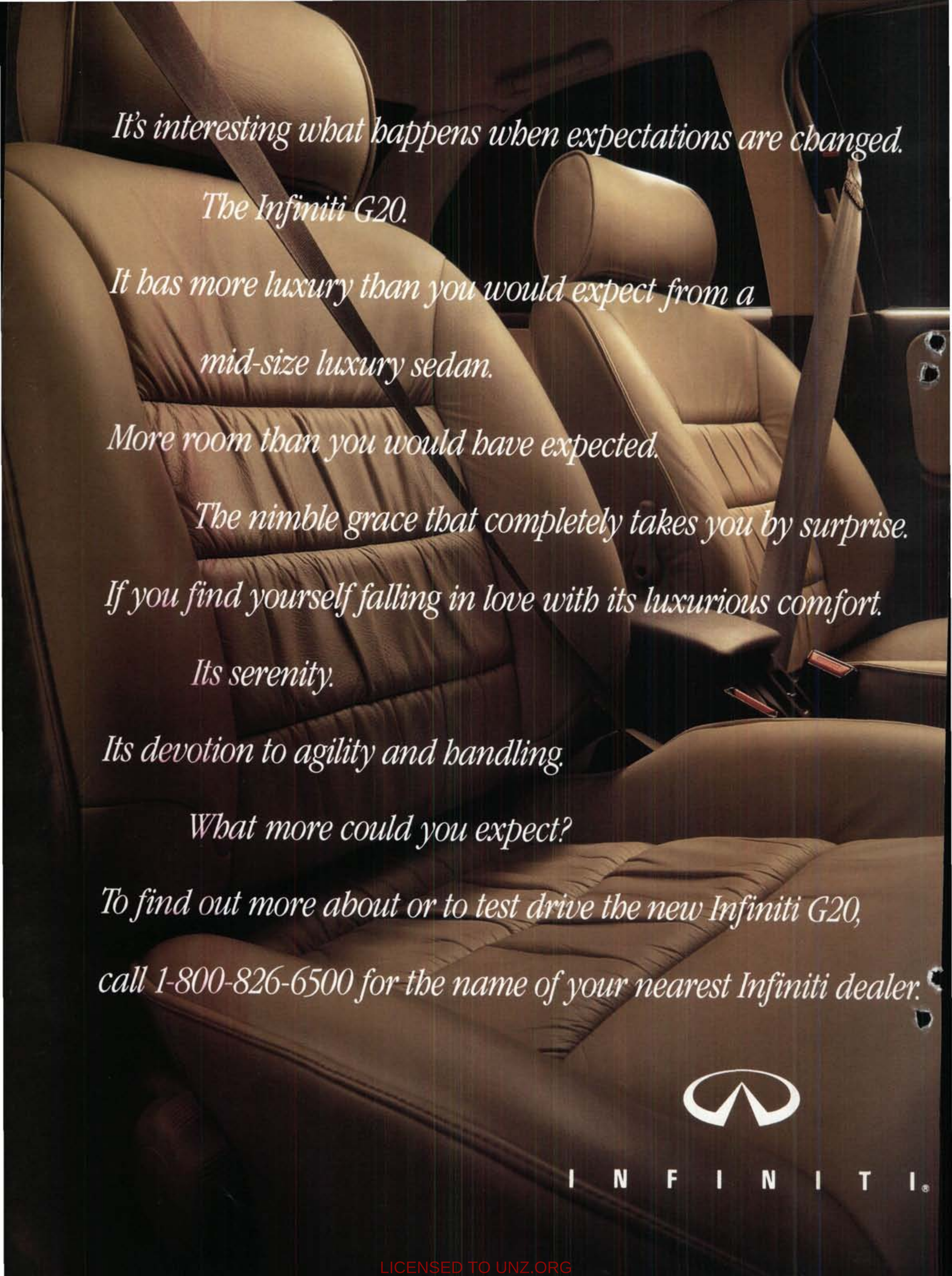

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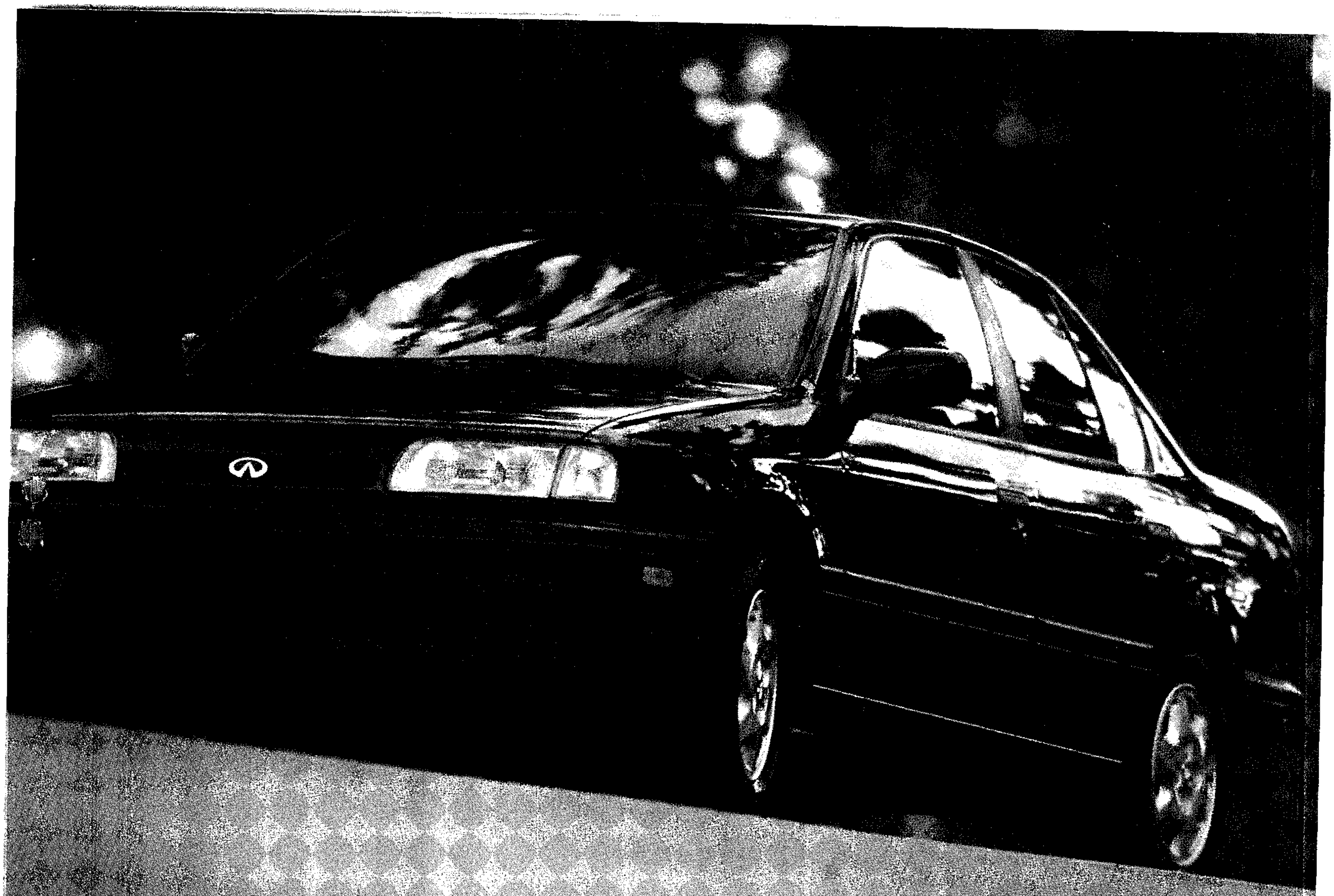

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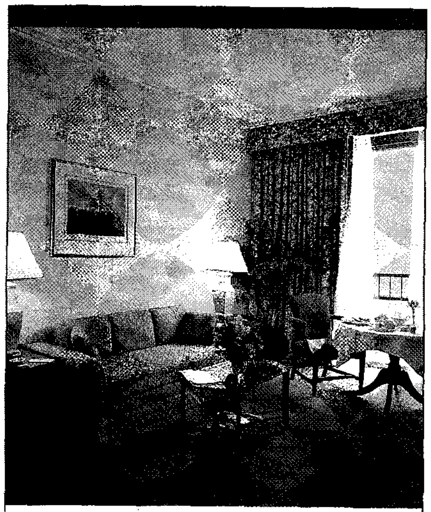

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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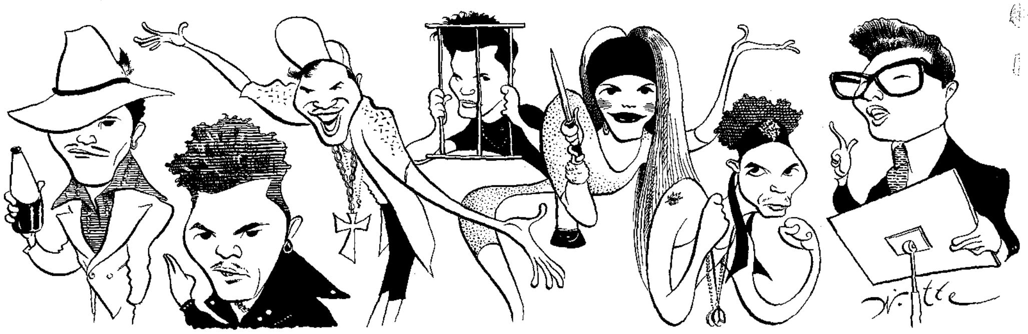
	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20			

THE THEATRE

As they become little more than picturesque ruins, the city's bridges seem to provide us with transport more imaginative than vehicular—transport for the hidden retro-Romantic painter in us, perhaps. Actually, there's another reason for our shifting view of them: we're crossing them less and less often in search of good theatre. This is especially true of Walt Whitman's borough; we just haven't been over there much lately. Feeling both nostalgic and slightly adventurous the other night, however, we bypassed the afflicted bridges and took the IND over to the Nostrand Avenue stop, to attend a performance of "Camp Logan," a new drama at the Billie Holiday Theatre (1368 Fulton Street). We're glad we did, because the outing restored our faith somewhat in the borough's theatrical possibilities.



John Leguizamo as "Mambo Mouth"

The production, directed by A. Yujuan Carrieré-Anderson, is nothing remarkable, really—just a sensible, no-frills staging whose chief drawback is a limply conceived first-act curtain scene. The play itself, by Celeste Bedford Walker, has no distracting faults. It successfully disinters one of the most violent racial episodes in American military history: In August, 1917, members of the all-black 24th Infantry Regiment—stationed at Camp Logan, outside Houston—were harassed and assaulted by the local police. In retaliation, a hundred members of the regiment took up arms; twenty lives, more white than black, were lost. Ms. Walker's play illuminates the events that led up to the riot, as experienced by members of one of the company's barracks. On paper, these guys are a collection of clichés from Hollywood's version of the next world war: the tough sergeant; the bookish greenhorn; the young officer who's taken refuge in booze. ("It's a bad habit, not drinking," the officer says.) Onstage, however, the men transcend stereotypes; each has undergone singular misfortunes. There's no need to make the usual sheep-from-the-goats distinctions among the cast: both as performers and, eventually, as characters, these soldiers act as one.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Absent Friends—The New York première of a 1975 comedy by the British playwright Alan Ayckbourn. Lynne Meadow directed. Gillian Anderson, Brenda Blethyn, John Curless, Peter Frechette, Ellen Parker, and David Purdham make up the cast. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Candida—Laurie Kennedy has the title role in this production of Shaw's play. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company and directed by Gus Kaikkonen. Also with Guy Paul. In previews. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Circle Repertory Company—Jon Polito and Peter Riegert star in **ROAD TO NIRVANA**, a satire by Arthur Kopit. Previews begin Feb. 13. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Henry IV, Parts I and II—The sixteenth and seventeenth plays in the Public's Shakespeare Marathon, both directed by JoAnne Akalaitis, will run in repertory through March 31. Both are in previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire—A 1976 play by Caryl Churchill, presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Preview on Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

Lost in Yonkers—Neil Simon's new play, starring Irene Worth, Mercedes Ruehl, and Kevin Spacey; directed by Gene Saks. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Mule Bone—The première of a never-produced 1930 collaboration between Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. Directed by Michael Schultz. With Akosua Busia, Kenny Neal, and Eric Ware. Previews Feb. 12-13. Opens Feb. 14 at 6:45, and runs through March 17. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Taking Steps—Another comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, this one from 1979. With Christopher Benjamin, Bill Buell, Jonathan Hogan, Spike McClure, Pippa Pearthree, and Jane Summerhays; directed by Alan Strachan. Previews through Feb. 19. Opens Feb. 20 at 6:45. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

RECENTLY OPENED

Assassins—The new Stephen Sondheim musical about President killers and would-be President killers seems like a high-school pageant. Its premise—that America is supposed to be the land of opportunity, but that some people, on discovering that it isn't, go crazy and become celebrity murderers—isn't a very interesting idea to begin with, and Sondheim (and his bookwriter, John Weidman) haven't managed to put any spin on it. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/11/91.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 16.)

La Bête—Tom McGowan stars in this comedy by David Hirson, which is written entirely in verse. Richard Jones directed. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Camille, A Tearjerker—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Camp Logan—A play by Celeste Bedford Walker. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918. The show goes on a brief tour after the Feb. 16 performance; performances will resume here on March 7.)

Carreño—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross and directed by Gene Frankel. Most performances are in English; a few are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Earth and Sky—This modest thriller, by Douglas Post, in which a poet decides to investigate the murder of her lover, is nicely written and acted with style, under the direction of André Ernotte. Jennifer Van Dyck, as the heroine, and Michael Genet, as a hip bartender, are especially good. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Feb. 24.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

In Miami as It Is in Heaven—A play by Raul de Cárdenas. Three performances a week are in English, and four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes Feb. 24.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting three plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** and a double bill of Georg Büchner's **WOYZECK** and **LEONCE AND LENA**, which were adapted by Eric Bentley. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Let Me Live—OyamO's dynamic, poetic play is set in a jail in Georgia in 1932, and its hero is a black labor organizer, wrongly convicted, who is determined to get out. Randy Frazier heads the excellent company, which was directed by Bill Mitchelson. Music composed and directed by Olu Dara. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Lyndon—Lyndon Johnson, in the person of Laurence Luckinbill, wanders around the Oval Office reviewing (and justifying) his political career. He is convincing most of the time, both dramatically and historically, and this one-man show is more interesting than most. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes March 3.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo's one-man show, in which he portrays seven Hispanic characters. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Manhattan Punch Line—Presenting a festival of new one-act comedies. Program A: "Variations on the Death of Trotsky," by David Ives; "Gorgo's Mother," by Laurence Klavan; "Gangster Apparel," by Richard Vetere; and "Stay Carl Stay," by Peter Tolan. . . . ¶ Program B: "The Experts," by Bill Bozzone; "Foreplay," by David Ives; "The Staged Reading," by Michael Panes; "Mailman," by Matthew Carnahan; and "The Christmas Rules," by Craig Wright. Preview Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 12 at 6:45. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Monster in a Box—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Mondays and occasional Sundays, through Feb. 25.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Romeo and Juliet—A brawling, rackety production in which many of the words go by the board and many of the characters are blurred. Exceptions must be made of Miriam Healy-Louie, a true Juliet, who is fresh, beautiful, ardent, and funny, and of Lynnda Ferguson as Lady Capulet, Peggy Pope as the nurse, and Omar Carter as Benvolio. The misbegotten performance was directed by Bill Alexander, on temporary loan from the Royal Shakespeare Company. (Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film about C. S. Lewis that he wrote for the BBC is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that in the movie was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed, but cast and direction are both excellent. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Those Were the Days—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Closes Feb. 24.)

When Lightning Strikes Twice—A double bill of plays by H. M. Koutoukas: "Awful People Are Coming Over So We Must Be Pretending to Be Hard at Work and Hope They Will Go Away" and "Only a Countess May Dance When She's Crazy." With Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

LONG RUNS

ASPECTS OF LOVE: Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cars or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrates its thirty-first birthday next May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **PRELUDE TO A KISS:** Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.) . . . **THE ROTHSCHILDS:** The 1970 musical by Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, and Sherman Yellen. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it recreates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

IN 1926, William Butler Yeats wrote a poem about growing old called "Among School Children." The final couplet reads, "O body set to music, O brightening glance, / How can we know the dancer from the dance?" Neither dance criticism nor literary criticism has been quite the same since. The analyses continue to pile up. This year has already seen a provocative new book by the poet David Lehman—"Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man." Mr. Lehman describes how that controversial theorist took on Yeats' dancer and attempted to wrestle her to the ground. "Where readers have always seen unity [between the dancer and the dance], de Man discerns the opposite," Mr. Lehman writes. "Flying in the face of the 'traditional' interpretation, de Man insists on taking Yeats' rhetorical question literally." To do so, in Mr. Lehman's view, is not simply to deconstruct the poem and demystify the image but also to commit an act of presumption and disrespect against the poet.

The idea that one not only can know the dancer from the dance, but *must*, is crucial to anyone who views choreography as a text, with some sort of independent and intractable identity, rather than as the footprints of a process involving particular people at a particular time. The textual perspective is certainly one of the principles guiding "La Nijinska: Choreographer, Dancer, Teacher," a new show in the Vincent Astor Gallery, at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, at Lincoln Center (through April 6). The goal of the exhibition is to present Bronislava Nijinska, the formidably talented sister of Vaslav Nijinsky, as a creative artist on a par with painters and poets. The show's extensive captions lead one to believe that Nijinska made the kind of ironclad decisions about her choreography (many of them before stepping foot in a rehearsal studio) that resulted in ballets one can call either dancer-proof or dancer-impermeable, according to one's degree of admiration for them. The show's centerpieces are pages from Nijinska's notebooks containing her choreographic notations for her most enduring works, notably the 1923 "Les Noces," which Nijinska committed to paper through words and drawings in 1966, when Frederick Ashton asked her to restage it for the Royal Ballet. As it happens, New Yorkers also have a chance to catch "Les Noces" onstage February 28, during the Joffrey Ballet's "Nijinsky/Nijinska" program at the New York State Theatre.

New York City Ballet—Feb. 12 at 8: "Mother Goose," "The Cage," "Eight More," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Waltz Trilogy," "Ecstatic Orange," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Ives, Songs," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 2: "Swan Lake," divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Quiet City," "Other Dances," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 1: "Waltz Trilogy," "Ives, Songs," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 7: "Mother Goose," "Other Dances," "Valse Fantaisie," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: "La Source," "Ives, Songs," and "La Valse." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 24.)

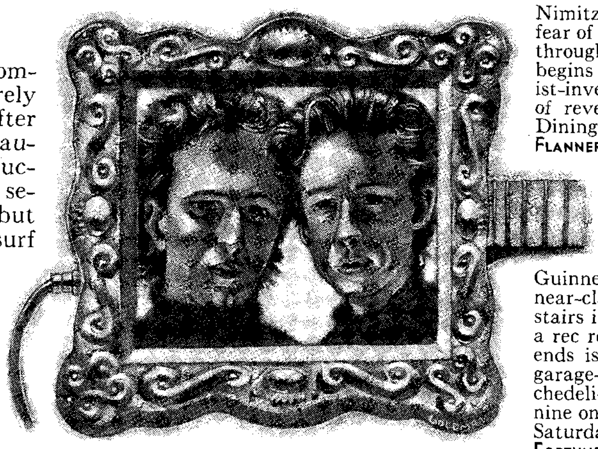
Feld Ballets/NY—Feb. 12 at 8: "Contra Pose," "At Midnight," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 and Feb. 19 at 8: "Ah Scarlatti," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "Common Ground." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 and Feb. 20 at 8: "Consort," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "Intermezzo No. 1." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Fauna," "Kore," and "Savage Glance." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: "A Footstep of Air," "Savage Glance," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 2: "Meadowlark," "A Footstep of Air," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 7:30: "Meadowlark," "At Midnight," and "Intermezzo No. 1." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 10.)

"American Movement"—A one-week joint engagement by three contemporary-dance companies. Feb. 12 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 2: Bebe Miller and Company in Act I of "The Hidden Boy: Incidents from a Stressed Memory"; the Elisa Monte Dance Company in "Treading" and "Dextra Dei"; and the Parsons Dance Company in "Scrutiny," as well as the première of "Tower," a solo work by David Parsons. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8 and Feb. 17 at 2: Bebe Miller and Company performing "The Hidden Boy" in its entirety. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 and Feb. 16 at 8: The Parsons Dance Company in "Scrutiny," "The Envelope," "Nascimento," and "Rise and Fall" (première). . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8 and Feb. 17 at 7:30: The Elisa Monte Dance Company in "The World Upside Down" (première). (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Donald Byrd/The Group—In programs of new works. With the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. Feb. 15-16 at 7:30 and Feb. 17 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

SOMEDAY, New York City's commercial districts will be entirely populated by theme bars. Long after other businesses—theatres, restaurants, nail-care salons—have succumbed to the process of natural selection, there will be nothing left but Wild West bars, Caribbean bars, surf bars, and taxis to get you to them. A new member of this hardy species has opened on the Upper West Side, a neighborhood where the future is now. It's called the Coyote Club (215 West 76th Street, at the corner of Broadway), and you probably don't need to be told that it's furnished with O'Keeffian animal skulls, cacti, a wooden Indian, and plaster coyotes baying at the ceiling. You also probably could have guessed that the bar has a list of specialty drinks like the Creepin' Jesus and the Redneck Mother; that a waitress dressed as a cowgirl and wearing a holster containing a bottle and a row of shot glasses wanders about offering patrons a drink called a "shit-kicker"; and that a variety of rockabilly, honky-tonk, and country-and-Western bands pass through here (the club refers to its entertainment as "shit-kickin' music"). There are a few things, however, that set this club apart from its many brethren. First, it's owned by the same people who own the hopping East Side blues bar Manny's Car Wash, which means that you can expect some reliable bands to show up. Second, the club is housed in a building with a curious decaying grandeur—you reach the bar by climbing a spiral stairway and passing through a peeling anteroom with heavy velvet drapes and a dusty chandelier. And third, the club's exterior features a piece of neon commercial art worthy of Las Vegas: a smiling cowgirl repeatedly drawing a six-gun.



The Rembrandts at the Marquee

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **JEFF HARNAR** is currently appearing in the Oak Room. Harnar, who is introducing two new shows, has been known to sing one number with a quiet, gentle lilt, then drop his voice down low and belt out the next one with a vibrato that could shake a diploma off a wall. His performances usually include just the right amount of bad jokes and over-the-top theatrics, as well as some musical surprises. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen, Harnar dedicates his show to the "1959 Broadway Songbook." (He was born that year.) Fridays and Saturdays at eleven-fifteen, he sings Cole Porter. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hangs over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **ELZA SOARES** will be here Feb. 12-16; **GROUP FIVE** starts up on Feb. 17.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night in this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** leads a trio Feb. 15-16. Tyner puts on extraordinary and, for the most part, well-attended shows. His playing, which segues seamlessly from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated, is only part of the package. Tyner's partners in the ensemble—bassist **AVERY SHARPE** and drummer **AARON SCOTT**—are with him every step of the way. The highlight of a recent appearance at Sweet Basil, in fact, was Sharpe's solo on "Monk's Dream." Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? Conga player and bandleader **RAY BARRETTO,** who was a member of Tito Puente's band in the fifties, is here through Feb. 17, with his own Latin-jazz band and with **DAVE VALENTIN'S** quintet. Music from nine. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—This is an excellent time to pay Bradley's a visit, because some first-rate young musicians will be coming through this week. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. Guitarist **MARK WITFIELD** will lead a trio Feb. 11-16 (and a quartet on Feb. 17), and trumpeter **ROY HARGROVE** leads a threesome of his own for the week beginning Feb. 18. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se—and the management eschews such things as advance bookings—but bohemian musicians often gather around a piano while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET** finishes up its stint in the Café Carlyle on Feb. 16. The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and has some four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days, so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. The coolly elegant **KAREN AKERS,** who'll be singing a program of musical-theatre numbers, as well as standards by Rodgers and Hart, Bernstein, and Sondheim, will start up on Feb. 19. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.... ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **FRANK OWENS** presides at the piano through Feb. 16, and Kurt Wieting takes over beginning Feb. 19. Music from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. A quartet belonging to saxophonist **BENNY GOLSON** will be here Feb. 12-17. Music after nine.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy. Pianist **MICHEL CAMILO** is here through Feb. 17, and the **CHARLIE BIRD** trio begins work on Feb. 19. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FLANNERY'S, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—Formerly a dive bar called McCarthy's, this two-floor establishment looks as if it has been dynamited and rebuilt from the ashes up. On the ground floor is a well-scrubbed, amiable pub with all the classic features—pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports—and a few near-classic ones, like a CD jukebox. Downstairs is a low-ceilinged space that looks like a rec room and that on Tuesdays and weekends is home to an enlightened mixture of garage-rock, rockabilly, surf-punk, and psychedelic-rock bands. Music begins at about nine on Tuesdays, and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. In the middle of the main dining room you'll find a Steinway grand, which, for two weeks beginning on Feb. 12, belongs to pianist **DAVE MC KENNA.** Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

INDIGO BLUES, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A sleek, modern jazz club, in the basement of the Hotel Edison, with glass brick, space-age carpeting, and long strips of cool-blue neon. The young Philadelphia-based jazz trio **PIECES OF A DREAM,** who've been known to work in some pop and funk inflections, comes in on Feb. 15.

JUDYS', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—Formerly Jan Wallman's. It's too early to say what's in a name change, but for now expect to find a new menu and some familiar faces. **JUDY KRESTON** and **DAVID LAHM** appear on Feb. 16. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, but chin music is often the dominant sound. Jazz pianist **RONNY WHYTE,** who is frequently heard at the Carlyle Hotel, and **FRANK TATE** will be here Feb. 13-16; **LEE MUSIKER** and **JAY LEONHART** start up on Feb. 20. Music from nine-forty-five.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. The **REMBRANDTS,** who'll appear here Feb. 19, are Danny Wilde and Phil Solem, formerly of the obscure New Wave outfit, Great Buildings. As the Rembrandts, they've recently released a hooky, harmony-heavy album of sixties-ish pop.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Where you can always smell the stogies. The **GEORGE SHEARING** quartet, which, apart from the brilliant British-born pianist, includes bassist **NEIL SWAINSON,** drummer **GRADY TATE,** and vibist **DON THOMPSON,** is currently in the midst of a three-week engagement. They perform material from the repertoire of Shearing's original quintet. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—What Cole Porter might have called a regal eagle's nest. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** is currently on hand. She has, in effect, had two lives in show biz: the first peaked in the early fifties, with a string of hit recordings and a starring role in "White Christmas"; the second began in the late seventies, when she signed with the Concord label. She has made fourteen records with Concord so far, half of which are tribute albums, devoted to the likes of Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Cole Porter, and, most recently, Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein. Onstage, Ms. Clooney's approach is natural and understated: she has a warm, husky but clear voice, a world-weary cheerfulness, and a disarming sense of humor that bubbles up everywhere. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to "score." Last fall, after a long slumber, the Tea Room's small, red-gold-and-green cabaret reopened. **SALLY MAYES** will perform on Feb. 17 at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. At present, the U.S. and Brazil seem to be embarked on an unofficial musical exchange program; Feb. 15-17, S.O.B. will host a carnival featuring an all-star samba band. First lady of bossa nova **ASTRUD GILBERTO** comes in Feb. 20-21. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. A trio consisting of **CEDAR WALTON, RON CARTER,** and **BILLY HIGGINS** is in residence through Feb. 17; cornettist **NAT ADDERLEY'S** sextet starts up on Feb. 19. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

TIME CAFÉ, 380 Lafayette St., entrance on Great Jones St. (533-7000)—The café's subterranean jazz annex—located around the block on a chunk of real estate that's temporarily safe from the encroachment of Tower industries—is a newcomer to New York's night life. On the club's back wall one finds embarrassingly cheesy renderings of full-figured gals—the kind of artwork usually reserved for pinball machines. Otherwise, Time Café is an airy, convivial place with some comfy, diner-style booths, a fleet of IKEA-style tables and chairs, and jazz musicians on the bandstand every Friday and Saturday, beginning at ten.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—An old, faithful jazz all-in-one. Every Monday, the Top of the Gate is home to the **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI & LEW TABACKIN** big band. Ms. Akiyoshi, who plays in the breezy Bud Powell tradition, is one of the finest bop pianists to be heard anywhere. Music from nine.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." Pianist-composer-professor **KENNY BARRON** leads a quintet here through Feb. 17; the resourceful guitarist **BILL FRISELL** brings a quartet in for a week-long gig beginning Feb. 19. A big band formerly led by the late Mel Lewis holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—The logo that appears on glasses, napkins, and matchbooks here—a bongo-playing monkey in fez and shades—embodies this pleasant restaurant-bar's blend of Africana and yuppie cool. The eponymous island is evoked by live palms, Rousseau-style murals, and etched-glass jungle scenes; Murray Hill is evoked by everything else. The **GIL GOLDSTEIN** quintet is here Feb. 14-16.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The piano-bass team of **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** can be found here the week beginning Feb. 18. Music from eight. Closed Sundays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

AS if administering fifteen credits a semester and being a mondo landlord weren't enough, New York University has decided to expand the consciousness of its enrolled by taking on Limelight. Ultra Violet—transformed from the Violet Café once the moon is high—is N.Y.U.'s attempt at an exclusive (even Rex doesn't require VIPs to flash ID cards) and "alternative" club for its student body. (How can you expect to be alternative when you're already the norm?)

Almost as funky as a Wilson Phillips video and drier than backstage at an Aerosmith concert, U.V. is the result of the university's understandable desire to offer its unwieldy but unworldly masses somewhere safe to go. It's funny, though, how a school chancellor introducing a d.j. on a club's opening night can act as a diabolically effective deterrent to getting down. Still, grooves could have got into the heart had the disco gremlins not been at work. As his records skipped more jauntily than Cathy Rigby on wires, the d.j. grumbled into the mike, "My music is cool, but these turntables are crap." With most guys looking as if they had just stopped by the frat house, and most girls (whose numbers were far greater than the boys) dressed for the Young Friends of the New York Public Library gala, the room bristled with the kind of sexual tension present at those sock hops June Allyson used to get worked up over. A mature U.V. employee suggested they rename the club the Chicken Ranch.

But even critics don't judge a club by opening night, and since we were informed by the manager that four hundred and fifty passes had been picked up for Saturday, we figured we should come back. Those tickets must have been thin enough to floss with, or every frat house must have had a beer blast, because that Saturday, at the hour when Roxy is peaking, there were exactly eight people at U.V. Bewigged and begowned, d.j. emeriteuse Anita Sarko had had enough of Madonna requests and said to the "crowd," "O.K., here is a singer you *all* know. He's white and he has a big Top Forty hit." Vanilla Ice had been requested by a student who could have been fathered by Jan and Dean and who probably wouldn't have been able to find WBLS on the dial if you'd offered him a Porsche. Nevertheless, at the first strains of "To the Extreme" he delightedly scooped up his girlfriend to dance—slow. How's that for school spirit? They're going to try live performances at U.V., and some of Haoui Montaug and Sarko's hilarious karaoke nights, to spruce things up, but it looks as if it's going to be a tough semester around Washington Square East. Maybe there's a reason Sound Factory doesn't offer a course in quantum mechanics.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY— PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

JOHN KELLY & COMPANY—In "Maybe It's Cold Outside," a performance work about five people playing games inside a dormitory. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 14-16 at 8:30, Feb. 17 at 3 and 8:30, and Feb. 20 at 8:30. Through Feb. 24.)

"BELLE REPRIEVE"—An in-drag musical version of "A Streetcar Named Desire." Presented by Split Britches, a local ensemble, and Bloolips, a British group. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 14-16 at 10.)

BRIGID MURPHY—In "Tall Tales & Fairy Stories," a poetry reading on stilts. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. Feb. 16 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS—The irreverent basketball players who make breaking the rules the name of the game. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 17 at 7:30.)

JOHN MORAN—Presenting his new music-theatre work, "The Hospital Night Nurse," and never-before-seen excerpts from "The Manson Family." (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 18 at 8.)

P. S. 122—Feb. 14-17 at 9:30: "Green Eyes Are Fine," a new performance work by the Otrabanda Company, with choreography by Rocky Bornstein and music by Blue Gene Tyranny. Through March 3. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

NOWHERE in the art of this century is the Zeitgeist of utopian modernism more eloquently conveyed, in its ascendant vigor as well as its more twisted phases, than in the career of Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935), the great Russian painter, designer, and visionary aesthetician. Malevich is, among other things, the purist of abstraction par excellence—a beacon to such contemporary artists as Sol LeWitt and Ellsworth Kelly. A very atmospheric array of his classic Suprematist works is currently on view at the Met, in a show of objects on loan (for the most part) from Soviet collections—the result of what is termed "an initiative" by the late Dr. Armand Hammer. Here we also find the early Malevich, who worked in Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, Fauvist, Cubist, and "Cubo-Futurist" styles, along with a number of the artist's intensely peculiar late paintings, from the thirties. These works, often backdated, alternately recall Renoir, Italian Renaissance portraiture, and Malevich's own prior conventions.

Malevich was very Russian. He saw himself as both peasant and prince, and was at once earthy and high-minded. Even in the earliest paintings on view—chunky Fauvist figures, for instance, that are indebted to Cézanne and Matisse, and that may even anticipate Léger's clubby-man mode—we can sense the pulsating, from-the-feet-up energy that, when mixed with the romance of Slavic folklore, has traditionally meant spirit in Russian art. It becomes quite clear, too, that Malevich's Suprematist works—his exquisite white-on-white compositions, especially—are icons.

The late works are so strange and touching. Many seem to be in codes. "Red Cavalry" (1928-32), for instance, is essentially a stripe painting—almost a Kenneth Noland *avant la lettre*—but with a tiny, ghostly calligraphic brigade riding the top line. There isn't any late-Picabia foppishness in paintings such as the pseudo-Renaissance "Girl with a Red Staff" *(1932-33) and "Self-Portrait" (1933).* Rather, one is tempted to wonder whether Malevich, suppressed in the new Stalinist regime, did not seek a measure of freedom and integrity through some theosophical notion of time travel. In "Girl with a Comb in Her Hair," from 1932-33, the girl may resemble a Capulet, but that comb is nothing less than Suprematism incarnate.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Kasimir Malevich, 1878-1935" offers a hundred and seventy paintings, drawings, and architectural models by the Russian founder of Suprematism. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a re-creation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and

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*Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-*inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. Through April 14. . . . ¶ Nine paintings and eleven works on paper by the German Romantic Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). All of the works are from the Pushkin and the Hermitage, in the Soviet Union. Through March 31. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, selected from the museum's collection. Among the artists shown are William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Seventeen Dutch-style cupboards crafted in New York and New Jersey between 1650 and 1800. . . . ¶ "Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art." Through March 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The work of Russian Constructivist Liubov Popova (1889-1924) is not as well known as that of her contemporaries Malevich, Rodckenko, and Tatlin, but this show—of fifty-five paintings, sixty works on paper, and a selection of theatre, book, and textile designs—should go far to redress that fact. Starts Feb. 14. . . . ¶ The museum's third "Artist's Choice" exhibition consists of a hundred and seventy portraits in various mediums, selected by Chuck Close. Through March 19. . . . ¶ In the museum's "Projects" space, the artist Dennis Adams critiques the museum itself with a particularly timely installation entitled "Road to Victory." This was also the title of an exhibition mounted *by Edward Steichen in 1942, when he was a* lieutenant commander in the Navy. (He later became the director of the museum's department of photography.) The entrance to the space is blocked by a row of identical vitrines with details of war photos from the original *exhibition reflected on their low shelves.* The walls of the vitrines are made of the same dark-blue glass that graces the much criticized apartment tower above the museum. Beyond the vitrines, on angled walls, are photomurals of the original exhibition, and *reflected on the lacquered wall behind them* are two fuzzy mirror images of what looks like the isle of Manhattan. On closer inspection these turn out to be photos of camouflaged troops in the desert. This is an exceedingly intelligent work that poses a slew of questions about propaganda, colonization, and museums and their ostensible neutrality, but it is also visually unchallenging and depends far too much on the overused Beuysian vitrine. Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ Fourteen panoramic photographs of Antarctica, *taken in 1989, by Stuart Klipper.* Through March 19. . . . ¶ "British Photography from the Thatcher Years." Starts Feb. 14. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A small show of twenty-nine more or less surrealistic works on paper made between the late nineteen-thirties and the recent past. There is a fast segue of drawings by figures, minor and major, of the New York School—from Gerome Kamrowski to Robert Motherwell, from Pavel Tchelitchew to Jackson Pollock. The aim of these artists was to liberate Surrealism from any hint of narrative or illustration. Biomorphic abstraction was the outcome then. And though we are offered works by mavericks such as Lee Bontecou (whose tondo drawing is a cross between Oskar Schlemmer and "The Road Warrior") and the altogether maniacal Jess, biomorphic abstraction—vintage 1989, by Carroll Dunham—is also the last note of this show. Through April 7. . . . ¶ Sixty paintings, sculptures, and prints from the nineteen-eighties, including work by Jasper Johns, Barbara Kruger, Susan Rothenberg, and David Salle. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; *Sundays, noon to 6.)*

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Among the seventy-four paintings in "Albert Bierstadt: Art & Enterprise" are several of the artist's monumental Western landscapes, as well as a selection of his smaller plein-air oil sketches. . . . ¶ A lobby installation by Reeva Potoff that includes, among other materials, pages of the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica arranged in a cone that reaches to the ceiling. Through March 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Manifest Destiny," a small show of rare nineteenth-century books and illustrations relating to government expeditions into "frontier" areas in the United States. Through April 30. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

TERRITORIALITY

During the past several weeks, as if in preparation for the Westminster Kennel Club show at the Garden, painted silhouettes of black, pink, and white dogs, usually resembling Scottish terriers and poodles, have been proliferating on newspaper dispensers and construction sites around Manhattan. Captured with hurried brushstrokes in standing or mid-stride position, alone or in small groups, the figures are painted no higher than knee level—where they might be missed by humans but not by dogs.

"People tell me what breed I'm painting, but to me they're just mutts," says Peter Mayer, the thirty-seven-year-old Manhattan-born artist who started doing the figures all along the East Side three years ago and recently stepped up his production to include other parts of the borough. He calls the shapes "Rottweilian eyesores," because "they look pretty awful on someone else's property." Mayer says that he paints the dogs "to mark territory" and that he started doing them after having got a good response to a "nudes on the roof" series—also an unauthorized art venture. The color of the dogs is determined spontaneously, by whichever can of paint is within reach as Mayer leaves his apartment. Each figure takes about four seconds to execute, and the artist says he is rarely noticed while making his rounds. His work hasn't gone completely unremarked, however: the owner of the Charles Lucien gallery tracked him down not long ago and asked him to put together a show featuring the mutts (555 Broadway; through March 30). Mayer painted on the gallery walls and on canvas squares this time, instead of on scaffolding or newspaper dispensers. Still, the dispensers remain his favorite targets: "They have a lot of nerve putting those things on street corners."

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Romance of the Taj Mahal," an exhibition of paintings, drawings, carpets, jewelry, and other items, most from the Mogul period, in which the mausoleum was built. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A hundred sculptures and thirty-one drawings by Jacques Lipchitz. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Drawings of Anthony Van Dyck." Ninety sketches, studies, and more elaborate preparatory drawings by the master baroque portraitist (1599-1641). Starts Feb. 15. . . . ¶ A smaller selection of forty drawings by seventeenth-century Flemish artists such as Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, and David Vinckboons. Starts Feb. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—The last stop on a three-year tour for "The International Art Show for the End of World Hunger." The exhibition presents work by forty artists, including Susan Rothenberg, Walter Dahn, Nam June Paik, and Richard Hamilton. Through March 16. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Eastman Johnson's "The Cranberry Harvest, Island of Nantucket" was first shown at the National Academy's 1880 annual exhibition, and it is now the centerpiece of a show that includes thirteen of the artist's other cranberry-harvest studies and paintings. Through March 24. . . . ¶ Drawings and watercolors by the British Romantic Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Art What Thou Eat" is a show of nearly eighty nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, all having to do with those three square meals a day. Images range from Samuel Marsden Brookes' "Steelhead Salmon" (1885) to David Wojnarowicz's "Tuna" (1983). Through March 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brice Marden—The sight of Marden's classic seventies "Grove Group," assembled for the first time, is a slow, considerable pleasure and is also of historical note. The five abstract greenish paintings, inspired by sojourns in Greece, seem fired by landscape, tempered by architecture, and glazed by a sort of neo-Ruskinian moral anxiety, as well as, more literally, by the artist's characteristically lapidary encaustic technique. Through March 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—**thomas hart benton,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through March 2); **klaus fussman,** Ralph, 43 E. 78th St. (through March 2); **gregory gillespie,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through March 2); **stephen pace,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Feb. 23), and Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **philip pearlstein** and **barbara schwartz,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through March 2); **alice schille,** Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. (open Mondays, through March 2).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Janet Fish—New paintings, most of them still-lifes, and many in a nighttime mood. Fish is a virtuoso of transparency and texture, and she is especially good at striking a sturdy balance between conventional representation and abstract composition. In some of the best of these works, an everyday, domestic realism is subverted by Orientalist, medieval chivalric, or heraldic themes. In "Man's Best Friend," for instance, a black-and-white lapdog scratching itself on a kilim rug becomes part of a larger pattern of contemporary exoticisms for the home, and in "By the Sword" a beautiful art-pottery vase joins a bouquet of dried wildflowers, a pomegranate, and the knightly weapon to create an Arthurian table arrangement for today. Through Feb. 23. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Malcolm Morley—Morley's art is largely a matter of protean paint-handling skills governed by a fertile but chaotic brain. Here, in addition to a group of small pedestal sculptures of war machinery (they look like William Wegman's boy-toy images dipped and cast), we find a bunch of huge, luridly painted canvases that keep changing their minds, making a major theatrical display of tempestuous indecision. Abstract Expressionist broadstroking gives way to lyrical feathering, which in turn builds up to Freudian caricature à la Philip Guston or a neo-Gothic Expressionism reminiscent of Max Beckmann, only to culminate in a moment of sensitive painterly anecdote that brings to mind the early work of Alex Katz. There is one horizontally stacked triptych whose middle section—an Arthurian knight—almost had us weeping from maternal exhaustion. Morley's *very* motor. Through March 2. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Alice Provensen—A show of original watercolors for a recently published children's book titled "The Buck Stops Here: The Presidents of the United States." The visual style is bright, busy, and folkloric—quilts and samplers seem to have been inspirations—and the nuggets of information conveyed about our leaders are clear, essentially non-partisan, and respectful without being reverential. Well-known earlier collaborative works by Mrs. Provensen and her late husband, Martin, are also on view. Through March 9. (Feiwel, 24 W. 57th St.)

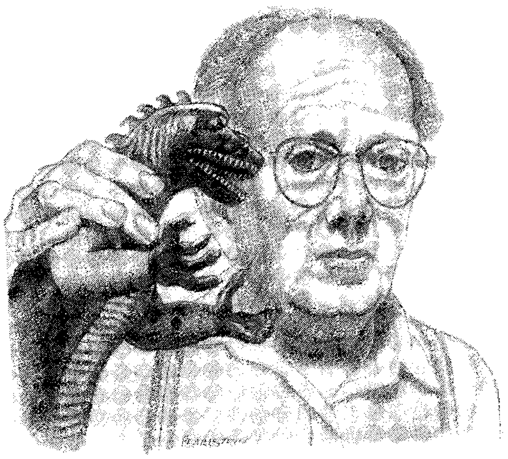
Niele Toroni—This Swiss artist's work always consists of rows of single-colored short brushstrokes that are usually painted on the walls, always with the same #50 brush. Like the output of the French Conceptualist Daniel Buren and the American serialist Sol LeWitt, Toroni's work has no experimental or arty intentions. In his current installation, the center of each room is inhabited by four easels arranged facing outward, each holding a canvas of orange strokes. On each of the four walls is a square of blue strokes. The groupings establish a concise relationship between figure and ground, viewer and art work. Curiously, the more arty the materials, the less arty the work tends to be. Through Feb. 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"Who Framed Modern Art or the Quantitative Life of Roger Rabbit"—Drawing on the Janis gallery's impressive inventory of modern masterpieces and its connections with the Museum of Modern Art, this guest-curated show presents atypical juxtapositions that range from the opportunistic to the ridiculous to the fascinating. In most of the combinations there is a pretense of statement, but little is actually said. If you go simply to admire some pretty good interior decoration, you can't help but be impressed by Brancusi's "Prometheus," Yves Klein's "Blue Sponge," and Ellsworth Kelly's "Two Blacks, White, and Blue," not to mention an O'Keeffe sexual abstraction, two Johns number drawings, and a late Pollock canvas. Little sense can be made of arrangements that group such artists as Arman, Dubuffet, and Hesse, but the flow from Koons' flowered mirror (a kind of cutesified version of van Gogh's "Sunflowers") to Andy Warhol's dollar signs and on to Ross Bleckner's "The Examination" is sweeping and illuminating. Through Feb. 16. (110 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**william bailey,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 13); **ben berns,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 2); **fernand léger** and **jenny lee,** Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 19); **robert andrew parker,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **betty parsons,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through March 2); **rodney ripps,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **charles seliger,** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **kimber smith,** Drake (through March 9) and Ross (through March 13), both at 50 W. 57th St.; **jack tworkov** and **dorothea rockburne,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **neil welliver,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 2).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Siah Armajani—Large metallic sculptural tableaux with references to industry, farming, and the public podium. These beautiful works are a slow sell and, with their evocation of the work ethic, must be the most earnest in town, with a Shaker simplicity and a Juddian precision. Through Feb. 16. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)



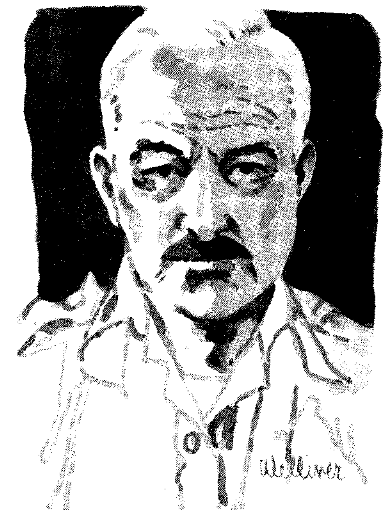
Self-portrait by Philip Pearlstein

Carl Bronson—The larger paintings in this show are done on grainy wood and have the sort of luscious names—"Sugared Twilight" and "Satin Sunburst"—that you might find on decorator paint chips. Although a bit thin, they do have a certain sensuousness, like rainbow sherbet. The smaller works, painted on aluminum machine parts, hold no interest whatsoever. Through Feb. 16. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

John Currin / Robin Kahn—Charmingly retro-style portrait paintings of girls. The portraits—of solemn black girls with big 'fros and of white Midwestern blondes who look destined for nursing school—might very well have been inspired by high-school-yearbook photographs from another era. / Red satin capes or sheets embroidered with IUDs. Through Feb. 16. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Jan Hashey—Numerous felt-tip-marker drawings of a bowl and its shadow, in different colors, each exhibited with a carbon copy below it. Whether displayed in large or small groupings, the works have an embellished beauty to them; in the larger groups, a wonderful rhythm develops across the rows of drawings and carbons. Through Feb. 23. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Alfred Jensen (1903-81)—Virtually nothing is known of the pre-fifties art of the elfin Jensen, who was known in the thirties and forties as the companion of art patron and Baltimore Museum benefactor Saidie May, and in the fifties as the better-adjusted sidekick of Mark Rothko. In the late fifties, Jensen's work seemed to arrive completely formed, in a style that had nothing to do with the prevailing Abstract Expressionism. Younger generations have returned to his work from this period, and it has become the antecedent to so many different kinds of art, from the opulent mosaics of the pattern painters to the obsessive diagramming of Jean-Michel



Self-portrait by Neil Welliver

ART–Cont'd

Basquiat. Jensen's vision—an amalgam of Guatemalan textile designs, scientific diagrams, arcane numerical systems, color theories, and much more—is truly eccentric, with something of an autistic genius to it. This show of seven works is a fine selection of his luscious, beautiful, and haunted canvases. Through Feb. 23. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Komar & Melamid—With this exhibition of paintings and architectural models commissioned for the Holy Rosary Church in Jersey City, Komar & Melamid announce the opening of "a new school of art—the School of Bayonne." The paintings on view (studies, actually, for two large works in the church) are of religious figures floating sweetly against attractively distressed metallic grounds that evoke industrial landscapes, and that look a bit like the neo-Pompeian works on scrap metal by the artist Vincent Gallo. Their titles include "Annunciation, N.J.," "The Star of N.J.," "Fallen Angel, N.J.," and "Heaven, N.J.," which might suggest the advanced state of ambivalence these two Russian-born mavericks now live in. Sincerity and skepticism meet here in a deadlock. Are K. & M. becoming the John Sayleses of the art world? Through Feb. 16. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Stephen Laub—These new objects, which incorporate small archival photographs, are more enigmatic and sculptural than Laub's earlier works. One piece, which is a bit Gober-like, is colored Ryman white and echoes an accompanying photo of black people in the back of a bus. Through March 2. (Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Mary Lucier—A key figure in recent American video art, Lucier is playing down the video component in this sculptural installation about landscape, industry, and decay. The results are disappointing. The best part *is* the video, which is essentially a sequence of images of rusted machinery and relics of mass transportation and communication that speak of the days when the railroads were the nation's bloodline. The video is shown on a large monitor atop a forklift, the only grouping in the show that has weight and poetry. Whereas the other sculptural arrangements are too Kienholzian, this one has a romantic spirit all its own. Through Feb. 23. (Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway.)

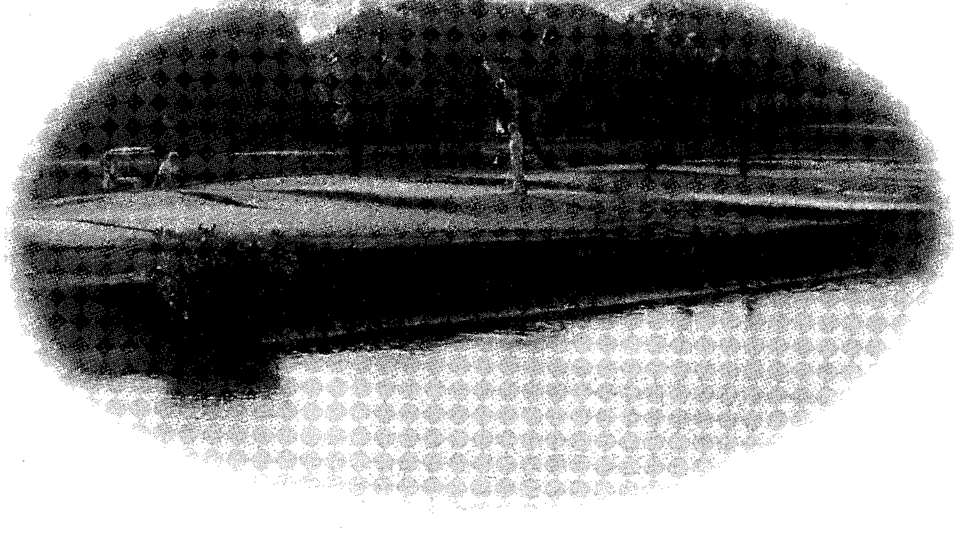
Donald Moffett—This founding member of Gran Fury, an offshoot of ACT UP, has been attempting to find a place in the private-gallery system for his activist public art about AIDS and government inaction. Half the work in this two-gallery show consists of muffled photographic transparencies of gay porn images overprinted with instructions to action, such as "CALL THE WHITE HOUSE AND TELL BUSH WE'RE NOT ALL DEAD YET." These works, which resemble Gran Fury's public posters, seem to have undergone a minimal amount of adjustment from public to private space, from temporary posters to ostensibly permanent art works. And no great force has been gained by violating the private-gallery world with the strategies of public advertising. The shows also contain sets of white sheets displayed on beds mounted on the wall, some with a neatly embroidered hole in the center, and some with embroidered words and phrases on the sheet's lip, such as "MIRACLE" or "GOD GOD GOD GOD GOD." The holes are both a celebration of sex—a means of counteracting homophobia by making the orifice generic—and, like the infusion of politics into art, a rupture in a pure and seemingly neutral field. The sheets are hauntingly beautiful, expressing the complex impact of AIDS on the psyche in a penetrating and deceptively soft-spoken way. Through Feb. 16. (Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway, and Simon Watson, 241 Lafayette St.)

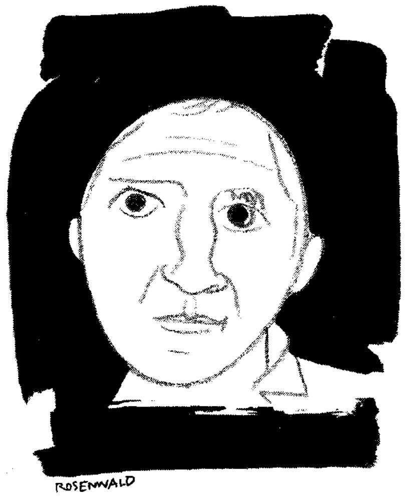
Jeff Perrone—Ceramic plaques featuring details from Indian and Persian miniatures, closeups of various kinds of Islamic and harlequin patterns, and occasional Matissean compositions and unattributed quotations, such as "Eroticism triumphs over uniformity." Through Feb. 23. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Mimmo Rotella—A show tracing the course of Rotella's marriage of Abstract Expressionism and anarchy from the fifties to the present. Several decades ago, working alongside other *nouveaux réalistes*, Rotella ripped gangs of posters off Parisian streets. The earlier works here, which consist of layers of posters ripped through to reveal layers beneath, have uncannily sophisticated compositions and color relationships, with the arcing rhythms of Krasner and the compositional jaggedness of Still. The recent works continue the fifties spirit with a touch of Dada: a larger poster of a woman in a green vinyl suit is ripped in a way that conjures Rothko. The show reaches a glorious climax with a billboard from 1990 for Holiday on Ice—a grand landscape with some of the heroic scale of Newman. Through March 2. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

"The Political Arm"—Most of the work in this show does not simply take on political subjects but also attempts to bring a political consciousness to the very forms of art. Barbara Kruger's photo work about the fracture of the left, for example, was not created as a unique, rarefied piece but was published as an issue of the magazine *Aqui*. Hans Haacke's "Ceci n'est pas un pouce," which explores the co-dependency of art and patronage, and the documentation of a Krzysztof Wodiczko light projection, which casts the art museum in the role of a sanctioned political terrorist, are cogent examinations of the politics endemic to the institutions of the art system. With the inclusion of Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, and Lawrence Weiner, the show takes a peculiar and thought-provoking turn, conjuring the political climate of the sixties in which their art developed. LeWitt's wall drawing and Weiner's conceptual wordwork suggest that a rereading of their art along political lines could prove rewarding; the Andre work, however, could benefit from further explanation. Through Feb. 23. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Short List—**LESLIE BOHNENKAMP**, Gimpel, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 16); **JOHN BOWMAN**, Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway (through March 9); **STAN BRODSKY**, Kelly, 591 Broadway





Jack Tworkov

(through March 5); **WIM DELVOYE,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through March 2); **SIMON EDMONDSON** and **DAVE MORIARTY,** Bietzel, 102 Prince St. (through Feb. 23); **SAM GLANKOFF** and **PETER SCHROTH,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through Feb. 23); **WOLFGANG LAIB,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through March 2); **INGE MAHN,** Brown, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **AGNES MARTIN,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **MANUEL NERI,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **ALAN SCARRITT,** Engelhorn, 591 Broadway (through March 16); **PETER SHELTON,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through March 9); **ALAN SHIELDS,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through March 2); **JOE STEFANELLI,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. (through Feb. 23); **PAT SUTTON,** Zarre, 379 West Broadway (through March 9); **MEYER VAISMAN,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through Feb. 23); **YOSHI WADA,** Harvey, 537 Broadway (through March 2).

PHOTOGRAPHY

CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN (1905-1985) is a curious figure in the history of photography, one who seems to slip in and out of attention, perhaps because his work can't be pinned down. His most famous photographs are probably the architectural images he took for "Ghosts Along the Mississippi," a book that was first published in 1948 and has since been reprinted many times. His reputation might have suffered from the success of that book—the photographs in it show that Laughlin had a knowing feel for the South, and they no doubt encouraged the sense that he was a regional artist. And we know, unfortunately, how so-called regional artists get glossed over.

The Robert Miller gallery (41 East 57th Street) is currently showing an exhibit of Laughlin's still-lifes, from 1931 to 1946. We can't say that all the pictures knocked us out, but there's plenty to look at here: Laughlin's still-lifes manifest an individualistic vision, and have much to do with modern objectivity and Surrealism. These photographs experiment with scale and perspective, at times to wonderful ends, as in a picture of a glass vase that has at its core a reflection of Laughlin and his camera. The show also offers Laughlin's own ideas about his work—in the photographs' captions. When we inquired about these unusual elaborations we were told that Laughlin took some seventeen thousand negatives, and wrote captions for all of them. His notes are informative, bombastic, and fascinating. They make it clear what a complex figure this man was. If you want an extra treat, ask to see some of the other photographs by Laughlin that the gallery has in the back room. This work goes beyond still-lifes and Surrealism, and deep into the gothic.

"THE EUROPEAN EYE: LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE 1850's"—Among the many remarkable images in this show are two photographs of Jerusalem taken by Auguste Salzmann around 1854. One is called "Village de Siloam," and the other "Vallée de Hinnom." The photographs are salt prints made from waxed-paper negatives, a fact that makes them seem like a particularly miraculous presence—frail but victorious, having survived the years. Through Feb. 28. (Min-Lowinsky, 584 Broadway.)

SHORT LIST—**BRUCE CHARLESWORTH,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through March 16); **LOIS CONNER** and **VAL TELBERG,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through March 16); **WILLIE DOHERTY,** Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through March 2); **MARTIN KIPPENBERGER,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **JACQUES HENRI LARTIGUE,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through March 16); **CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **LISETTE MODEL,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 16), and International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through March 24); **ANDREA MODICA,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Feb. 23); **JUDITH JOY ROSS,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 23).

We all remember a simpler time. Phones rang less. Laughter rang true. The world turned slowly. You ran out the door to greet the new day. And all you needed was a friend and a game to make it worthwhile. But maybe the times weren't simpler at all. Maybe all you really need is a place to simplify yourself again.

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MUSIC

PERHAPS the most striking development in musicology in the last two decades has been the surge in study of the once ignored nineteenth century, with once despised Italian opera at its head. When historical musicology got going, about a hundred years ago, one of its missions was to elevate the taste of a musical world mired in Donizetti, Rossini, and Verdi. What would the editors of the monumental Bach Gesellschaft edition think if they knew that the most eagerly watched complete-works-in-progress today (after the dawdling Neue Mozart Ausgabe) is devoted to Verdi?

Many hands have contributed to this radical redefining enterprise, but almost everyone in the academic world agrees on naming a single leader: Philip Gossett, of the University of Chicago. Professor Gossett was born in 1941, and his education, like that of the early musicologists, was centered on music far older than the nineteenth century. But by the mid-nineteen-sixties he had settled on Rossini as a specialty, and he produced his Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton in 1970 on the problems of textual criticism presented by Rossini's operas. This cleared a field that he has now plowed, planted, and harvested for two decades: editing operas; coördinating and minutely supervising the editions of other scholars; printing autograph facsimiles and old scores for wider scholarly examination; guiding the work of the Rossini festival in Pesaro; crossing the globe to advise opera houses on details of performance practice; and producing a steady stream of writing (scholarly and popular) distinguished by rigorously clear exposition, creative leaps of understanding, bracing polemical vigor, and a brio that does honor to the composer with whom he is most associated.

Professor Gossett has taken time out to write on other topics (for instance, a tour de force demonstrating that Beethoven's sketches for the "Pastoral" Symphony could show the composer deriving one theme from another—but only if you reassemble the leaves in the order Beethoven held them, as the published facsimile had not done). What he has yet to do is produce a "big book." But word has come our way that his imminent series of lectures at Princeton (February 14, 21, and 28) will be a working out of some segments of a grand statement on the problems of editing and performing nineteenth-century opera—exactly the book that Professor Gossett's admirers have been wanting. The lectures take place in the evening and are open to the public; for information, call 1-609 258-4027.

Jochen Kowalski in BAM Opera's "Orfeo ed Euridice"

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**LUISA MILLER,** with Kallen Esperian, Isola Jones, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; conducted by Nello Santi. (Feb. 11, Feb. 15, and Feb. 20, all at 8.) . . . **FIDELIO,** with Elizabeth Connell, Helen Donath, Gary Lakes, and Kurt Moll; Christof Perick. (Feb. 12 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 1:30.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Myra Merritt, Placido Domingo, and Brian Schexnayder; Christian Badea. (Feb. 13, Feb. 16, and Feb. 19, all at 8.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Kathleen Battle, Luciana Serra, Francisco Araiza, and John Macurdy; Richard Woitach. (Feb. 14 at 8.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Pamela Coburn, Helen Donath, Frederica von Stade, Jorma Hynninen, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Feb. 18 at 8.)

BAM Opera—Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice," imported from the Berlin Komische Oper and sung in German (with English supertitles). Countertenor Jochen Kowalski appears as Orpheus (who, in this staging by Harry Kupfer, is depicted as a pop singer); sopranos Dagmar Schellenberger-Ernst and Christiane Oertel appear as Euridice and Amor. Hartmut Haenchen conducts. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Feb. 11 at 7, Feb. 13 and Feb. 15 at 8, and Feb. 17 at 2.)

Juilliard Opera Center—Presenting a staged production of Verdi's "Falstaff," conducted by Julius Rudel. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 874-7515. Feb. 11 and Feb. 13 at 8, and Feb. 16 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting. Symphonies by Mozart and Brahms (his third), as well as Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto, featuring Igor Oistrakh. (Feb. 12 at 7:30.) . . . ¶ Orchestral music by Mozart and Steven Mercurio (the première of his "For Lost Loved Ones"), as well as Mozart's concert aria "Bella mia fiamma" and Strauss's "Four Last Songs," with soprano Maria Ewing. (Feb. 14-16 at 8.)

National Symphony Orchestra—Mstislav Rostropovich conducts Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony (the "Little Russian") and two concertante works: Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder," with baritone Håkan Hagegård, and the New York première of Richard Wernick's Piano Concerto, with Lambert Orkis as soloist. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Music by Tchaikovsky, Honegger, and Sinding, with various soloists. Richard Kapp conducts. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 12 at 8.)

New York City Opera Orchestra—Guido Ajmone-Marsan conducts orchestral works by Mendelssohn and Stravinsky; soprano Renee Fleming is featured in Ravel's "Shéhérazade," and Hideko Udagawa is soloist in Bruch's First Violin Concerto. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—George Manahan conducts a concert of Baroque music, including Bach's Cantata No. 51 ("Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen"), with soprano Harolyn Blackwell and trumpeter Neil Balm. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 16 at 8.)

Mozarteum Orchestra—Hans Graf conducts the Salzburg-based ensemble in music by their native son. The program includes two Mozart marches, the "Jupiter" Symphony, and the Piano Concertos Nos. 20 (in D Minor) and 21 (in C Major), with Justus Frantz. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 17 at 3.)

St. Bartholomew's Chamber Orchestra—Randall Craig Fleischer conducts music by Barber and Tchaikovsky; William Trafka is soloist in Poulenc's Organ Concerto. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 17 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

New Jersey Symphony—Hugh Wolff conducts music by Debussy and Stephen Albert (the New York première of his Pulitzer Prize-winning "RiverRun"). Soprano Dawn Upshaw joins the orchestra for Charles Tomlinson Griffes's "Three Songs of Fiona Macleod" and Paul Dukas's "L'Ondine et le Pêcheur," a recently unearthed ten-minute-long concert aria composed to a text by Théophile Gautier. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18 at 8.)

National Orchestral Association—Jorge Mester conducts premières of works by Anna Rubin, Paul Nelson, Marc-Antonio Consoli, and James Sellars. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 19 at 8.)

New York Choral Society—Bach's B-Minor Mass, directed by John Daly Goodwin; with soprano Betsy Norden, mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, tenor Steven Tharp, and bass-baritone Jan Opalach joining the orchestra and chorus. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directs the seven motets of Johann Sebastian Bach: the traditional six, along with the motet "Ich Lasse Dich Nicht," which was long attributed to Sebastian's youngest son, Johann Christian. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

RECITALS

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—Following a performance of a Haydn string quartet, the group traces the composer's influence in works by Brahms and Martinů. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

Taverner Consort and Choir—Andrew Parrott directs the ensemble of six singers and five instrumentalists in a re-creation of a Vespers for the Feast of St. Theodore, interweaving plainchant with selections from Monteverdi's "Selva Morale e Spirituale." (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Scott St. John—The Canadian violinist performs an unaccompanied sonata by Bach, sonatas by Beethoven and Grieg, and the première of a "Duo Concertante" by Robert Maggio; assisted by pianist Robert Koenig. Presented by Young Concert Audiences. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Barbara Cadranel—Harpsichordist, playing music by Bach, Scarlatti, Mel Powell, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

William Purvis and Toby Hanks—The horn player and the tubaist perform solo and ensemble works, with pianist Colette Valentine. Presented by the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Feb. 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing music by Beethoven and Brahms, and (with pianist Ilana Vered) a quintet by Ezra Laderman. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Playing three Mozart string quartets and his D-Major Quintet (with guest violist Walter Trampler). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Boston Camerata—A semi-staged recounting of the romance of Tristan and Iseult through medieval music and poetry, directed by Joel Cohen. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

New York Camerata—The chamber ensemble performs Brahms' B-Major Trio, Op. 8; a flute quartet by C. P. E. Bach; and the première of James Primosch's "Weil Alles Unsagbar Ist," a twenty-minute work based on texts by Rainer Maria Rilke. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Allison Eldredge—The cellist, winner of a 1989 Avery Fisher Career Grant, makes her New York recital début playing works by Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Franck, and Debussy. Her mother, pianist Yoshie Akimoto, accompanies. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting solo and chamber music by Domenico Scarlatti, Fauré, and Dvořák. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Feb. 14 at 7:30 and Feb. 17 at 4.)

Leo Kraft—Several of the composer's chamber works for varied ensembles. Performers include pianists Christopher Oldfather and Aleck Karis. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Feb. 14 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Musica de Camara String Quartet—The ensemble, which is dedicated to underscoring the contributions of Puerto Rican performers and composers in New York's concert arena, performs music by Haydn, Borodin, and Jack Delano, who emigrated many years ago from his native Ukraine to Puerto Rico. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 14 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Presenting Mozart's Piano Quartet in E-Flat, Prokofiev's Op. 119 Cello Sonata, Smetana's First String Quartet, and Oliver Knussen's "Cantata for Oboe and String Trio," with guest oboist Stephen Taylor. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 15 at 8 and Feb. 17 at 5.)

RUTH LAREDO—The pianist performs and discusses music by Schumann and Brahms; with violinist Eric Grossman. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 15 at 8.)

DOWNTOWN CHAMBER AND OPERA PLAYERS—Presenting chamber works by Mozart, Martinů (including his jazzy "La Revue de Cuisine"), and William Mayer (his "Khartoum," as well as several premières). (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

WAVERLY CONSORT—Michael Jaffee directs six centuries of music relating to Jerusalem and the Middle East, from the medieval troubadour Oswald von Wolkenstein's musical account of his shipwreck on the Black Sea to Dufay's motet on the fall of Constantinople and sacred pieces from Baroque Russia. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 16 at 8.)

EDUARDO FERNANDEZ—The classical guitarist performs music by Sor, Ponce, Takemitsu, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

PARTITA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Peforming Debussy's First Clarinet Rhapsody, Bartók's "Contrasts," and Brahms' B-Major Trio. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Feb. 17 at 2. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

ARIEL CHAMBER PLAYERS—A quintet, playing chamber music by Telemann, Haydn, Beethoven, and Ginastera. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 17 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

VINLAND DUO—Oboist Virginia Brewer and pianist Mary Ann Brown present a mostly Scandinavian program, including works by Peder Gram, Neils Otto Raasted, and (with soprano Margaret Astrup) Grieg (his song cycle "Haugtussa"). (Plymouth Church, 75 Hicks St., Brooklyn Heights. Feb. 17 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

KEITH JARRETT—The pianist's program will consist entirely of improvisations. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 17 at 7:30.)

SYLVIA ROSENBERG—Violin, accompanied by pianist Robert Spillman; music by Beethoven, Bartók, Janáček, and John Harbison. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 17 at 8.)

WASHINGTON BARELLA—In his New York recital début, the Brazilian oboist plays music by Bach, Dutilleux, Ginastera, Isang Yun, Antonino Pasculli, and his compatriot Ernst Muhle. Flutist Carol Wincenc and pianist George Lopez assist. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 19 at 8.)

PEGGY PEARSON AND TONI LIPTON—The oboist and the bassoonist, assisted by pianist Robert Merfeld, in a program of music by Francis Poulenc, Gunther Schuller, David Olan, and Alexander Miller. Presented by the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Feb. 19 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

FRANK WIENS—Performing five of Prokofiev's piano sonatas. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 19 at 8.)

MASANOBU IKEMIYA—The pianist performs Mozart and Ravel as well as some rhythmic Americana by Gottshalk and Joplin. (Bösendorfer Center, 406 E. 79th St. Feb. 19 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

EMANUEL AX—The pianist performs sets of variations by Beethoven, Webern, and André Previn (the première of his "Variations on a Theme by Haydn"); a Schubert impromptu; and Liszt's B-Minor Sonata. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

CECILIA BARTOLI—Mezzo-soprano, singing songs and arias by Rossini, Bellini, and Mozart, as well as a selection of *arie antiche*. Pianist Martin Katz assists. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

NEW MUSIC CONSORT—Presenting instrumental and vocal chamber music by Takemitsu, Xenakis, Carter, Colin Matthews, and Aaron Kernis. (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

LOIS SVARD—The pianist, a specialist in contemporary music, performs works by Jerry Hunt, Hans Otte, William Duckworth, Blue Gene Tyranny, and György Ligeti (his 1985 "Études pour Piano, Vol. 1," inspired by Conlon Nancarrow's rhythmically complex pieces for player piano). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

STING—There is no escaping the promotional blitz of a Sting tour—he uses interviews as a form of public therapy, and often comes off as self-congratulatory. In the four years since his last album, the underrated ". . . Nothing Like the Sun," he's acted in movies ("Stormy Monday") and on Broadway ("The Threepenny Opera"); sung with Springsteen and Peter Gabriel; been an active member of the Rainforest Foundation; and weathered the loss of both his parents to cancer. Now, with his excellent new album, "The Soul Cages," he sings, sometimes movingly, of father-son relationships, and his sense of musical composition is impeccable. Recently, while hosting "Saturday Night Live," this handsome devil's dark sense of humor gave him a real swagger, and his performance was loose and lively. On this tour, he promises to bring along a stripped-down, anti-digital rock band; these could be some of the sharpest, least meandering shows he's played since his days with the Police. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Feb. 15-20 at 8.)

INXS—A dozen years of playing together hasn't blunted the sound of these Australian rockers. Their latest album, "X," is filled with the kind of sharp, danceable rock tunes that the group has become so expert at. In concert, lead singer Michael Hutchence sings his little behind off, to the screaming approval of adoring fans. He's actually become quite a cool rock singer—sexy and confident—and the band certainly livens things up considerably. Swinging, solid rock like this is hard to find. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 16 at 8. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Feb. 18 at 7:30.)

TAKE 6—With Ellis Marsalis. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 13-14 at 8.)

ANDY TEIRSTEIN—Presenting "Winter Man," an opera. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 13-16 at 8, and Feb. 17 at 3.)

SLAYER—With Testament. (Nassau Coliseum. Feb. 14 at 7:30.)

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"—Presenting Clark Terry, Roger Kellaway, Bucky Pizzarelli, Gene Bertoncini, and Jay and Mike Leonhart. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. Feb. 14 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

DAVID CARROLL—Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Feb. 14 at 10:30.

BLUES CONCERTS—Feb. 15 at 8: John Cephas & Phil Wiggins, and Larry Johnson. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 8: The James Peterson blues band and Rosco Gordon, Bob Gaddy, and Larry Dale, with Killing Floor. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

SUSAN OSBORN—Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Feb. 15 at 8.

BILLY HARPER QUINTET—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 16 at 8.

JOANNE BRACKEEN—Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Feb. 16 at 8.

WORLD KULINTANG ENSEMBLE—Uris Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. Feb. 17 at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.

STRING TRIO OF NEW YORK—Music for violin, guitar, and bass. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Feb. 17 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

RONNY WHYTE—With Frank Tate and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 17 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

ZUSAAN KALI FASTEAU—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 17 at 7. Admission by contribution.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

KNICKS—Vs. the Chicago Bulls, Feb. 14 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Pistons, Feb. 17 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Feb. 19 at 7:30.

NETS—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Feb. 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Denver Nuggets, Feb. 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Sacramento Kings, Feb. 19. (Game time, 7:30.)

RANGERS—Vs. the Devils, Feb. 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Feb. 15. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, Feb. 18. (Game time, 7:30.)

ISLANDERS—Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Feb. 12. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 16. (Game time, 7:35.)

DEVILS—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Feb. 14 at 7:45. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Feb. 16 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Feb. 18 at 7:45.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

HORSES—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

UP STEPS—On Feb. 14, a hundred and thirty men and women will sprint up approximately fifteen hundred steps in the Empire State Building. The start, at 10:30, is in the lobby, and the finish line is on the eightieth floor.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

COINCIDENTAL—Chinese New Year's Eve (4689, the Year of the Ram) coincides this year with Valentine's Day, making Feb. 14 a perfect occasion for fireworks. Take your loved one to Chinatown in the evening, and see the annual festivities, light some firecrackers, and shimmy with the gigantic dragon. The beating you hear may be the traditional Chinese drums—or it may be your heart.

RAPTORS—Birds of prey—hawks, falcons, and owls—abound in Fort Washington Park; the Urban Park Rangers will show you where on Feb. 17 at 1. Bring binoculars and meet at the westernmost end of W. 181st St.

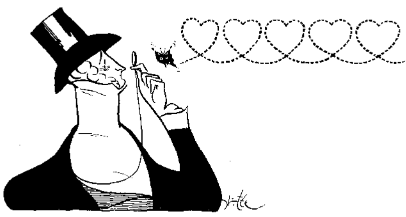
MEDALS—After an awards ceremony at the American Numismatic Society's annual meeting, there will be a slide show/lecture by Mark Jones, the Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. Mr. Jones will talk about the French-made medals of the American Revolution. (Broadway at 155th St. Feb. 16 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

ART SHOW—Five days of art, art, art, art, art. Sixty-four galleries—including Solomon, Pace, Knoedler, Colnaghi, and Emmerich—are exhibiting works this year at the 7th Regiment Armory. (Park Ave. at 66th St. Feb. 15-18, from noon to 8; and Feb. 19, from noon to 6. Tickets at the door.)

SPRING BULB SHOW—Hyacinths, crocuses, camelias, irises, cyclamens, paper-whites—all blooming in Brooklyn, at the Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4.

READINGS—Feb. 14 at 8: John Barth reads from his new novel, "The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 7: David Levering Lewis, Amiri Baraka, Quincy Troupe, Cornel West, and Greg Tate read from the works of African-American writers. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. Tickets at the box office only.) . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 7: Carol Frost and Baron Wormser read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS—Roy Lichtenstein talks about his art. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 14 at 8.) . . . ¶ Mario Vargas Llosa gives a lecture in honor of World Freedom Recognition Day. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. Feb. 16 at 2. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Martin D. Hyman talks about Chumley's, the former speakeasy in Greenwich Village. (86 Bedford St. Feb. 20 at 2. For reservations, call 534-1672, ext. 206.) . . . ¶ Quentin Crisp gives a lecture called "On Wit." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Feb. 20 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.)



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 16.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Meet the Applegates" (directed by Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman. From Feb. 15: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.
Theatre 2: The Third Animation Celebration.
Theatre 3: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
Theatre 4: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (Tom Stoppard), with Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 14: "Too Much Sun" (Robert Downey), with Robert Downey, Jr., Eric Idle, Ralph Macchio, and Andrea Martin. From Feb. 15: "Iron & Silk" (Shirley Sun), with Mark Salzman.
Theatre 6: "Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Feb. 14: "Rodrigo D: No Future" (†); and "A Tale of the Wind" (1988, Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan; in French), with Ivens.
Feb. 15-17: (Separate admissions) "Touki Bouki" (1973, Djibril Diop-Mambety; a Senegalese film); and "Tilai" (Idrissa Ouedraogo).
From Feb. 19: (Separate admissions) "Touki Bouki"; and "Yeleen" (1987, Souleymane Cisse).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "L.A. Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 3: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

Cinema 12, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Vanishing" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 13: "Queen's Logic" *(Steve Rash). From Feb. 14: "The Silence* of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.
Theatre 4: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 13: "Dances with Wolves" (†). From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs."
Theatre 6: "L.A. Story" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Grifters" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 14: "The Russia House" (†). From Feb. 15: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase and Aykroyd.
Theatre 4: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 13: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci. From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Awakenings" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"GoodFellas" (†).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash). From Feb. 15: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase and Aykroyd.
Theatre 2: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson. From Feb. 15: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 14: "Book of Love" (Robert Shaye), with Chris Young, Trisha Leigh Fisher, and Josie Bissett. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Awakenings" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 3: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 2: "L.A. Story" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 12: "The Russia House" (†). Feb. 13: Theatre closed. From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.
Theatre 2: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Hamlet" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Godfather Part III" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.
Theatre 2: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston. *From Feb. 15: "Nothing but* Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase and Aykroyd.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 12: "Wait for Me in Heaven" (1987, directed by Antonio Mercero; in Spanish), with Jose Soriano and Chus Lampreave. From Feb. 13: "Larks on a String" (1969, Jiri Menzel; in Czech).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro, Burt Lancaster, Donald Sutherland, Dominique Sanda, Sterling Hayden, and Gérard Depardieu.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 13: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates. From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.
Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Hamlet" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 14: "The Grifters" (†). From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 14: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret. From Feb. 15: "Alligator Eyes" (John Feldman).
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 14: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 14: "Once Around" (Lasse *Hallström*), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands. From Feb. 15: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd).
Theatre 4: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).
Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 6: "Awakenings" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 9: "The Grifters" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0600)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts. From Feb. 15: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.
Theatre 2: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 3: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Green Card" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Meet the Applegates" (Michael Lehmann), with Ed Begley, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Dabney Coleman; and "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 14: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.
Theatre 4: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 14: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci. From Feb. 15: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (Mike Nichols), with Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Sheltering Sky" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (Tom Stoppard), with Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, and Richard Dreyfuss.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Alice" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Vincent & Theo" (†).

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Dances with Wolves" (†).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Awakenings" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.

Theatre 2: "Taxi Blues" (Pavel Lounguine; in Russian).

Theatre 3: "Ay, Carmela!" (Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura and Andrés Pajares.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "L.A. Story" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 13: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash). From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.

Theatre 4: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Feb. 14: "Green Card" (†). From Feb. 15: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase and Aykroyd.

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 2: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

Theatre 2: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 3: "L.A. Story" (†).

Theatre 4: "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts.

Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 6: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

Through Feb. 13: "Flight of the Intruder" (John Milius), with Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, and Brad Johnson.

From Feb. 14: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Eve of Destruction" (Duncan Gibbins), with Gregory Hines and Renée Soutendijk.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 13: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field. From Feb. 14: "Flight of the Intruder" (John Milius), with Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, and Brad Johnson.

Theatre 3: "The Russia House" (†).

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through Feb. 13: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

From Feb. 14: "The Silence of the Lambs" (Jonathan Demme), with Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara. From Feb. 15: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 2: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

WEST SIDE CINEMA 1 AND 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 14: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston. From Feb 15: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase and Aykroyd.

Theatre 2: "White Fang" (Randal Kleiser), with Klaus Maria Brandauer, Ethan Hawke, Seymour Cassel, and James Remar.

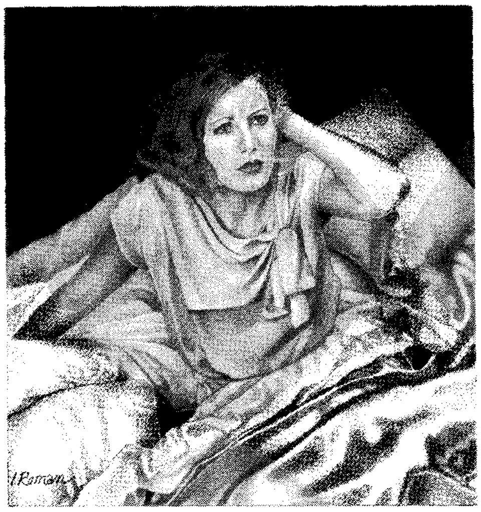
REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Feb. 11: "Anna Karenina" (1935, directed by Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Fredric March, Basil Rathbone, and Maureen O'Sullivan; and "Mata Hari" (1932, George Fitzmaurice), with Garbo, Ramon Novarro, Lionel Barrymore, and Lewis Stone.

Feb. 12-13: "Susan Lenox, Her Fall and Rise" (1931, Robert Z. Leonard), with Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, and Alan Hale; and "As You Desire Me" (1932, George Fitzmaurice), with Garbo, Erich von Stroheim, and Melvyn Douglas.

Feb. 14-16: "Camille" (1937, George Cukor), with Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, and Henry Daniell; and "The Painted Veil" (1934, Richard Boleslavsky), with Garbo, Herbert Marshall, and George Brent.



At the Biograph Cinema,
Greta Garbo in "The Kiss"

Feb. 17-19: "A Woman of Affairs" (†); and "Queen Christina" (1934, Rouben Mamoulian), with Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, and Lewis Stone.

From Feb. 20: "Conquest" (1937, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Charles Boyer, and Maria Ouspenskaya; and "The Kiss" (1929, Jacques Feyder; silent), with Garbo, Conrad Nagel, and Lew Ayres.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

Through Feb. 19: "Rikyu" (Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Rentaro Mikuni and Tsutomu Yamazaki.

From Feb. 20: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (1985, Hector Babenco), with William Hurt and Raul Julia; and "Ménage" (1986, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Michel Blanc, and Miou-Miou.

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through Feb. 12: "Carmen Jones" (1954, Otto Preminger), with Harry Belafonte, Pearl Bailey, and Dorothy Dandridge; and "St. Louis Blues" (1958, Allen Reisner), with Nat King Cole, Eartha Kitt, Bailey, and Cab Calloway.

Feb. 13-14: "Home of the Brave" (1949, Mark Robson), with Frank Lovejoy, Lloyd Bridges, Douglas Dick, and James Edwards; and "Lost Boundaries" (1949, Alfred Werker), with Beatrice Pearson and Mel Ferrer.

Feb. 15-17: "Cabin in the Sky" (1943, Vincente Minnelli), with Ethel Waters, Eddie Anderson, Lena Horne, and Louis Armstrong; and "Pinky" (†).

Feb. 18-19: "The Member of the Wedding" (†); and "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961, Daniel Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, and Diana Sands.

From Feb. 20: "Imitation of Life" (1934, John Stahl), with Claudette Colbert, Louise Beavers, Rochell Hudson, Fredi Washington, Warren William, and Ned Sparks; and "The Emperor Jones" (1933, Dudley Murphy), with Paul Robeson and Dudley Diggs.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Feb. 11: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Andersson, and Nils Poppe.

Feb. 12: "Local Hero" (1983, Bill Forsyth), with Peter Riegert, Denis Lawson, Fulton MacKay, and Burt Lancaster; and "Restless Natives" (1986, Michael Hoffman).

Feb. 13: "The Stranger" (1946, Orson Welles), with Welles, Edward G. Robinson, and Loretta Young; and "Mr. Arkadin" (1955, Welles), with Welles, Michael Redgrave, Patricia Medina, and Akim Tamiroff.

Feb. 14: "October" ("Ten Days That Shook the World"; 1927, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film); and "Potemkin" (1925, Eisenstein; a Russian silent film).

Feb. 15-16: "Masculine Feminine" (1965; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud and Chantal Goya; and "A Married Woman" (1965, Godard; in French), with Macha Meril.

Feb. 17: "Gone with the Wind" (1939, Victor Fleming), with Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, Leslie Howard, and Olivia de Havilland.

Feb. 18: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed), with Bobby Henrey, Ralph Richardson, and Michèle Morgan.

Feb. 19: "The Effect of Gamma Ray on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" (1972, Paul Newman), with Joanne Woodward, Roberta Wallach, and Nell Potts; and "I Never Sang for My Father" (1970, Gilbert Cates), with Melvyn Douglas, Gene Hackman, Dorothy Stickney, and Estelle Parsons.

Feb. 20: "Performance" (1970, Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg), with Mick Jagger and James Fox; and "Don't Look Now" (1973, Roeg), with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Feb. 11 at 2:30: "Private Hell 36" (1954, directed by Don Siegel), with Ida Lupino, Steve Cochran, and Howard Duff. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 3: "Stagefright" (1981, Jon Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 6: "The Bigamist" (1953, Lupino), with Lupino, Edmond O'Brien, and Joan Fontaine. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 6:30: "Tyger Tyger" (1990) and "Fauve" (1990), both directed by Donna Cameron, who will be present. . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 2:30: "High Sierra" (1941, Raoul Walsh), with Lupino, Humphrey Bogart, and Joan Leslie. . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 6 and Feb. 14 at 2:30: "Road House" (1948, Jean Negulesco), with Lupino, Richard Widmark, and Celeste Holm. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 3 and 6: "Slaves of the System" (1990, Kaisa Rastimo) and "And That's a Fact" (1990, Markku Honkanen), both documentaries. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 6: "Private Hell 36." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 2:30: "Ladies in Retirement" (1941, Charles Vidor), with Lupino, Louis Hayward, and Evelyn Keyes. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 3: "Nightshift" (1980, Robina Rose). . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 6: "The Man I Love" (1946, Walsh), with Lupino, Robert Alda, and Bruce Bennett. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 6: "Sure Fire" (1990, Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 2: "Deep Valley" (1947, Jean Negulesco), with Lupino, Dane Clark, and Wayne Morris. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 2:30: "Sure Fire." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 5: "On Dangerous Ground" (1952, Nicholas Ray), with Lupino, Robert Ryan, and Ward Bond. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 5: A program of short films by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 2: "While the City Sleeps" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews, Lupino, and Vincent Price. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 2:30: "Il Grido" (1957, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Steve Cochran, Alida Valli, and Betsy Blair. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 5: "Ladies in Retirement." . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 5: "Rembrandt Laughing" (1988, Jost). . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 2: "Deep Valley." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 2:30: Another program of short films by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 5: "The Man I Love." . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 5: A third program of short films by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30: "On Dangerous Ground." . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 3 and 6: "Road of Life" (1979, Nelson Pereira dos Santos; in Portuguese). Mr. Pereira dos Santos will be present at 6. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6: "The Big Knife" (†).

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians and people who influenced them. Whoopi Goldberg: Feb. 12-16: "Whoopi Goldberg . . . Directed from Broadway"

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

(1985, HBO) and "The Ernie Kovacs Show" (1956, NBC). . . . From Feb. 19: Excerpts from Goldberg's television appearances; "Mirror Image" (1960, CBS), an episode of "The Twilight Zone," with Vera Miles; and excerpts from other shows that influenced Goldberg. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ James Dean television appearances. Feb. 12-16: "Harvest" (1953, NBC), an episode of "Robert Montgomery Presents," with Dorothy Gish and Ed Begley; and a tribute to Dean on "The Steve Allen Show" (1956, NBC). . . . From Feb. 19: "Hill Number One" (1951), an episode of "Family Theatre," with Roddy McDowall and Ruth Hussey. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 2.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Feb. 14 at noon: "Happy Mother's Day" (1953), "Ku Klux Klan: The Invisible Empire" (1965), and "Chiefs" (1969), all directed by Richard Leacock. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at noon: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (1984, Stan Lathan). . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30: "Princess Tam Tam" (1935, Edmond T. Gréville; in French), with Josephine Baker and Albert Préjan.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"From Harlem to Hollywood: The 1970s New Black Cinema." Feb. 16 at 2: "Shaft" (1971, Gordon Parks, Sr.), with Richard Roundtree and Moses Gunn. . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 4: "Super Fly" (1972, Gordon Parks, Jr.), with Ron O'Neal and Sheila Frazier. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 2: "Car Wash" (1976, Michael Schultz), with Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Ivan Dixon, and Clarence Muse. . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 4: "Cooley High" (1975, Schultz), with Glynn Turman, Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs, and Garrett Morris.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 13 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Life and Nothing But" (1989, Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Philippe Noiret, Sabine Azéma, and Pascale Vignal. . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "A Flame in My Heart" (1987, Alain Tanner; in French), with Myriam Mézières.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Through Feb. 14 at 8: "Tribulation 99" (Craig Baldwin) and "Forevermore" (Eric Saks). . . . ¶ From Feb. 15: "H-2 Worker" (Stephanie Black), a documentary. (Showings Mondays through Fridays at 7 and 9, and Saturdays and Sundays at 4:30, 7:30, and 9.)

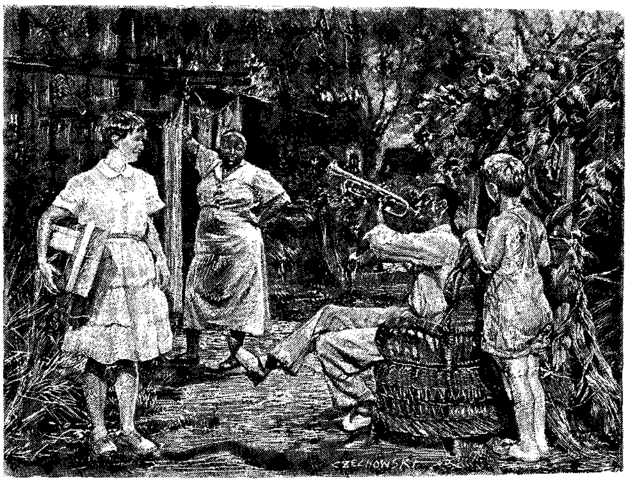
Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Feb. 14 at 1: "Mo' Better Blues" (1990, Spike Lee), with Denzel Washington, Cynda Williams, Joie Lee, Giancarlo Esposito, and Lee; "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Lee), with Tracy Camila John, Tommy Redmond Hicks, John Canada Terrell, and Lee; and "That's Black Entertainment" (1989, William Greaves), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 6: "House Party" (1990, Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid, Robin Harris, and Martin Lawrence; and "I'm Gonna Get You Sucka" (1988, Keenen Ivory Wayans), with Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes, Antonio Fargas, Bernie Casey, and Wayans. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 1: "Carmen Jones" (1954, Otto Preminger), with Harry Belafonte, Pearl Bailey, and Dorothy Dandridge; "Stormy Weather" (1943, Andrew L. Stone), with Bill Robinson, Lena Horne, Cab Calloway, and Fats Waller; and "Cabin in the Sky" (1943, Vincente Minnelli), with Ethel Waters, Eddie Anderson, Horne, and Louis Armstrong. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 6:30: "Mo' Better Blues" and "She's Gotta Have It."

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 5th Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Feb. 16 at 4 and 6:30: "The Man with the Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov, a Russian silent film).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)



Julie Harris, Ethel Waters, James Edwards, and Brandon deWilde in "The Member of the Wedding"

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews Fine Arts.)

Awakenings—This adaptation of Oliver Sacks' account of the awakening of post-encephalitic patients who had been "living statues" for decades is persuasive in its own terms, but it's also a near-perfect example of Hollywoodization. In the book, Sacks, the fabulist of illness, is drawn into his patients' aberrant states—he sees their abnormalities as brilliantly unique forms of consciousness to be charted. In the movie, the director, Penny Marshall, works the audience. She keeps zapping us to feel the humanistic, the obvious; her forte is to make blandness ring true. The movie is all about the doctor (Robin Williams) being a caring individual; Sacks, who's sensitized to prodigious kinds of experience, is turned into an absent-minded professor banging his head. As for Robert De Niro, who's the prize patient—well, when you're playing a silent, somnolent person who wakes up and soon after erupts into madness, you certainly give the impression that you're acting. As the head nurse—a role that's an embarrassment—Julie Kavner still manages to give the best performance. With the frail octogenarian Ruth Nelson as De Niro's mother, and John Heard, Penelope Ann Miller, Max von Sydow, and a large cast that includes Judith Malina, Richard Libertini, Laura Esterman, Anne Meara, Mary Catherine Wright, Alice Drummond, Keith Diamond, Peter Stormare, and Dexter Gordon. The screenplay is by Steven Zaillian; the syrupy music is by Randy Newman.—P.K. (2/11/91) (34th St. East, Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the widescreen cinematography, by Dean Semier, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Edward Scissorhands—A Transylvanian castle rises high in the air out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest, magically daffy), makes a call on the macabre, tumbledown place and discovers an adolescent fairy-tale boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), with two collections of long, sharp shears where his hands should be. (He was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor—Vincent Price, in flashbacks—who died before he could attach the hands he had prepared.) Peg invites the boy to come home with her. At first, this movie, directed by Tim Burton, has a lovely comic spirit, but when the suburbanites think Edward is dangerous and turn against him, the material turns into cheesy, plot-centered melodrama. It has a central flaw: the idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch is pre-interpreted. He's the pure creative artist who can't be around people because he can't help hurting them; he's the woeful misunderstood kid. Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton—he's Burton saying, "I've always been a sweet guy." (The picture becomes Christmassy and angelic.) With Winona Ryder.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinemas, and National Twin.)

The Godfather Part III—Lightning didn't strike three times. It's a big, ambitious project, and it looks like the first two "Godfather" movies, but the internal force has vanished, and the quality of feeling—what gave the films their lyricism and made the public bond with them—is gone. In the first two pictures the director, Francis Ford Coppola, took opportunistic, sensationalist material and turned it into drama. Now he doesn't transform the sensationalist material (the Corleones' involvement in Vatican swindles); he just presents it, with an aura of solemnity. With Al Pacino as the morose godfather, Andy Garcia as his successor, and Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, Eli Wallach, Joe Mantegna, Donal Donnelly, Raf Vallone, Bridget Fonda, Sofia Coppola, George Hamilton, Franc D'Ambrosio, and Helmut Berger.—P.K. (1/14/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews

It's hard to believe that Robert Aldrich's Hollywood exposé "The Big Knife" (playing February 19 and 21 at the Museum of Modern Art) could have been as entertaining thirty-six years ago as it is today. Movies as deliciously overwrought as this one must age before they reach full flavor. What did initial audiences make of the grandiose histrionics? When the self-righteous screenwriter tells the conflicted big-studio matinée idol that "half-idealism is the peritonitis of the soul," did they laugh or did they gasp? Doing both is the apt response.

Adapted by James Poe from Clifford Odets' play, this edgy behind-the-scenes look at a John Garfield-like star, Charlie Castle (Jack Palance), isn't campy in the manner of "The Bad and the Beautiful" or flowery like "The Barefoot Contessa." It's a quintessential mid-fifties "hard-hitting melodrama." Odets turns moral outrage into juicy invective and soap opera, while Aldrich establishes a seething, claustrophobic visual style and keeps his performers at full boil.

Charlie is a once promising theatre actor of the proletarian school. By resisting a long-term contract from schlockmeister Stanley Hoff (Rod Steiger), he's trying to restore his idealism and make up with his principled wife (Ida Lupino). Palance projects Charlie's bruised sensitivity as well as his capacity for amusement—you can see why he'd get lost in the Hollywood fun house. A choice collection of Tinseltown types whirl around him, including Jean Hagen as a giddy, straying wife, Wendell Corey as a clever hatchet man, Everett Sloane as a sweet, mealymouthed agent, and Shelley Winters as a brave bimbo. But Steiger lights the film's fuse. Pompous and monstrously self-centered, he enters Charlie's house wearing sunglasses. He also wears a hearing aid, as if to amplify the sound of his own voice. Odets provides Hoff with hilariously mangled, grandiloquent language, and Steiger rolls out each syllable with Brandoesque intensity. He's the ruling figure in a Hollywood where commerce turns values upside down: a Machiavelli who wants to be a rabbi.

34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Loews Astor Plaza; through Feb. 13. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; starting Feb. 14.)

GoodFellas—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come

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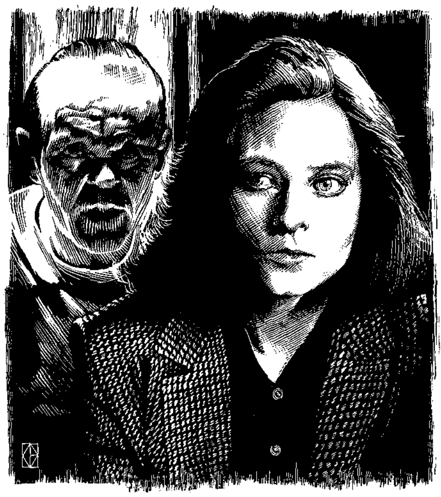

Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster in "The Silence of the Lambs"

through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Green Card—A limp, dispirited romantic comedy, written and directed by Peter Weir. A rather prissy horticulturist (Andie MacDowell) agrees to an in-name-only marriage to a Frenchman (Gérard Depardieu); he needs a green card to stay in New York, and she needs to show that she's married in order to get past the stuffy co-op board of the building in which she wants to buy an apartment. They meet (for the first time) at City Hall, do the deed, and separate, until several months later, when they're forced to pretend that their union is real—that they aren't strangers but devoted partners who know every little thing about each other. This is a serviceable premise for a screwball comedy, but the screwball is apparently not one of Weir's best pitches: the movie is as flat and lifeless as a hanging curve. Depardieu—as shaggy and hefty as ever—is a skillful comedian, and he looks as if he's having a great time. Not even his vivid presence is enough to rescue this wan little picture.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Quad Cinema, and Guild. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Feb. 14.)

The Grifters—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Myra (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chisellers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. film noir. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord: we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what film noir thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Bay Cinema, Coronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Feb. 14.)

Hamlet—Franco Zeffirelli gives Shakespeare's tragedy the ripping-yarns treatment: a dashing star (Mel Gibson); lavish sets and costumes; a generous amount of swordplay and leaping about; and just enough text to enable the audience to follow the story. Zeffirelli and his co-screenwriter, Christopher De Vore, have cut the play to an acceptable prestige-picture running time of two hours and fifteen minutes; you get the feeling that they would have eliminated Hamlet's tortured, action-retarding soliloquies if they could have done so without losing all those famous lines. The movie isn't exactly dull, but it doesn't feel like "Hamlet," either. The play's alternating rhythms of action and reflection have been flattened to a single tempo, brisk but monotonous. Gibson's performance is competent and enjoyable. He isn't interesting, though, and that's probably not entirely his fault—the intellectual vacuity of the production leaves him stranded. Among the all-star supporting cast, Ian Holm (as Polonius) and Paul Scofield (as the ghost of Hamlet's father) do the best work. Also with Glenn Close (as Gertrude) and Helena Bonham-Carter (as Ophelia). Cinematography by David Watkin. —T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

L.A. Story—Steve Martin wrote and stars in this romantic comedy—a take on "Annie Hall" that turns it inside out. What Martin loves about L.A. is what Woody Allen rejected it for: its pleasure-loving, materialistic irresponsibleness. For Martin, who grew up in Southern California, superficiality is the norm. This movie is totally inconsequential, and he accepts that—it doesn't bother him. As a clowning TV weatherman, Martin is split between his wonder-struck obsession with a British journalist, played by Victoria Tennant, and the carefree high of sex without love, represented by a bouncy nymph played (wonderfully) by Sarah Jessica Parker. The jokes spin by as if choreographed by summer breezes. If some of them aren't quite fresh, the movie is such a silly, light-headed joyride that you don't really mind. With a batch of sharp performers: Rick Moranis (uncredited), Marilu Henner as a tough dame with a cold stare, Susan Forristal as Martin's pal, M. C. Shan as a waiter-rapper, and Richard E. Grant, Kevin Pollak, and Patrick Stewart, among others. Artfully directed by the English TV ace Mick Jackson; with cinematography by Andrew Dunn, editing by Richard A. Harris, and a funny, lilting score by Peter Melnick.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Member of the Wedding (1952)—The Carson McCullers dialogue is one of the high points of literacy in American films—sharp and full of wit, yet lyrical. Scrawny, cracked-voiced Julie Harris (she was twenty-six at the time) plays Frankie, the motherless, fiercely lonely twelve-year-old tomboy, caught between childhood and adolescence, and fighting them both. Ethel Waters plays Berenice, the cook who looks after her, and Brandon deWilde is Frankie's owlish little playmate and whipping boy. The setting is a small Georgia town; the time is the summer when these three characters, who have been clinging to each other, are torn apart. Adapted from McCullers' 1950 stage success (with the same cast), the film is weak when it tries to "open up" the material, but fortunately Fred Zinnemann's direction respects McCullers' intensity and humor. This remarkable film failed commercially, perhaps for want of a conventional "story"; it is said that in some towns viewers didn't understand the material and, for most of the film, thought that Frankie was a boy. The movie company then cut a crucial twenty-minute segment (which included Ethel Waters' finest scene) and tossed the film into the lower half of double bills; in the seventies the footage was restored in some prints.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 18-19.)

Mr. & Mrs. Bridge—An adaptation, by the Merchant-Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States: and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us: they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema II.)

Pinky (1949)—Pinky is so light-skinned she passed for white while studying nursing in Boston; when she returns to her washerwoman grandmother's Southern shack, she is terrified and enraged by a fresh awakening to what she has almost forgotten—what it's like to be treated as a Negro, not only by contemptuous whites but by self-hating Negroes. Elia Kazan directs this material with a fine eye for the vicious undercurrents of Southern decay. The film garnered a little too much praise for its courage; it isn't overwhelmingly courageous—Pinky isn't played by a Negro actress, she's played by petite, delicate-faced Jeanne Crain, and at the end Pinky renounces her white fiancé, William Lundigan, thereby sparing Twentieth Century Fox no end of awkwardnesses. But the film hasn't been given its due for the tense dramatic sequences and the pressures we're made to feel. "Pinky" is slick and Hollywoodized, but it's also pretty good. Under Kazan's direction, Jeanne Crain is vibrant; she lacks conflict, but she shows qualities that don't turn up in her romantic comedy performances. And though Ethel Barrymore plays her image of herself as a wise liberal (not her best role), Ethel Waters, Nina Mae McKinney, and Frederick O'Neal have compelling moments. Also with Evelyn Varden, Kenny Washington, and Basil Ruysdael. The screenplay, by Philip Dunne and Dudley Nichols, is based on the novel "Quality," by Cid Ricketts Summer; the cinematography is by Joe MacDonald.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 15-17.)

Reversal of Fortune—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator).—P.K. (11/19/90) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Quad Cinema.)

Rodrigo D: No Future (1988)—The Colombian poet Victor Manuel Gaviría made this film (his first feature) about the adolescent boys who live in the barrios of Medellín; they don't have to understand English to respond to the music of the Sex Pistols. Heavy Metal has never sounded more at home than in this setting high in the hills that surround the drug dealers' city. Sitting on a rooftop, stoned *punkeros* play on drums and a cymbal and shout lyrics into the huge expanse of sky and the distant mountains; Rodrigo, whose mother has just died, is full of pent-up energy and despair—he carries two drumsticks and beats on any hard surface. Gaviría has a fine lyrical gift: his images move in rhythm with the boys' restlessness—their aimless stealing, hiding, killing. He doesn't, though, draw us into the boys' lives. This may be, as the critic Jaime Manrique has suggested, "because his postmodern cool prevents him from reaching out to the characters." (It's as if Buñuel had distanced us from the eroticism and cruelty of "Los Olvidados.") But, dramatically unformed as the movie is, you can feel an artist's imagination in every shot; the delicate colors are almost painful. The screenplay is based on an actual incident. With Ramiro Meneses as Rodrigo, in a cast of nonprofessionals who speak in their own slang; the words "no future" certainly apply—six of the boys who play main characters were dead within two years of the film's completion. In Spanish.—P.K. (Public Theatre; through Feb. 14.)

The Russia House—Fred Schepisi's movie, based on the novel by John le Carré, is an immensely satisfying entertainment. It's an espionage thriller in which things are much, much simpler than they appear to be—a notion that all but subverts the premises of the genre. As is usual in such stories, there are important secrets up for grabs; here they're contained in a manuscript written by a top Soviet defense scientist, Yakov (Klaus Maria Brandauer). The scientist has tried to put this document in the hands of a man he considers a kindred spirit—an alcoholic, saxophone-playing English publisher named Barley Blair (Sean Connery)—but it winds up in the possession of the intelligence professionals of the C.I.A. and MI-6, who then involve Barley in a complicated espionage operation. In this story, the fine-tuned paranoia of the Cold War seems almost comic. The screenplay, by Tom Stoppard, is cleverly constructed, and Schepisi—a virtuoso at making complex action lucid—gives the picture an even, flowing rhythm; he knows that the thriller elements are a farcical counterpoint to the real story, in which all the thrills are emotional ones. The movie diagrams the moves of the professional-spy game while keeping our attention focussed on the amateurs: Barley, Yakov, and Katya (Michelle Pfeiffer), the beautiful woman who acts as a messenger for Yakov and falls in love with Barley. This is a great role for Sean Connery; he gives his richest, most affecting performance. And he and Pfeiffer are superbly matched, because they're both direct, unfussy actors. The Russian scenery is lovingly photographed by Ian Baker, and the supporting cast provides small delights throughout. (James Fox and Ken Russell are particularly good.) This movie's professionalism is bracing because the enthusiasm and the generous spirit of the amateur are still in evidence.—T.R. (12/31/90) (Embassy. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin; through Feb. 12. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas; through Feb. 14.)

The Sheltering Sky—Published in 1949, Paul Bowles' semi-autobiographical account of his marriage fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy; the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself. Bernardo Bertolucci's attenuated film version filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror. The movie is about Kit (Debra Winger) giving over to another way of seeing; it's about the shift in her psyche as she becomes a contented love slave and moves away from the verbal, from definitions and categories and neuroses. Bertolucci appears to have lost interest in pace and excitement and verve; he goes deep into monotony. (The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad.) With John Malkovich as Port (who's full of smug self-hatred), Campbell Scott as Tunner, Jill Bennett, Timothy Spall, and Bowles (at seventy-nine) as some sort of presiding expatriate sage.—P.K. (12/17/90) (57th St. Playhouse.)

Sleeping with the Enemy—Julia Roberts, as a frightened young wife who fakes her death and changes her identity to escape her rich husband (Patrick Bergin), a psychopathic perfectionist. Roberts is an incredible object—you can at least see why a perfectionist would want to hang on to her. But she's a blank goddess here, and the settings—Cape Cod and Cedar Falls, Iowa (both shot in North and South Carolina)—are uninspiring. The director, Joseph Ruben, does a smooth job, with snappy editing every time there's a cut to the enraged husband on the wife's trail. There are no surprise twists, though; the picture is a glossy combination of secondhand, showing-off-Julia scenes from "Pretty Woman" and secondhand scares from "The Stepfather." Ronald Bass's script, out of a novel by Nancy Price, is one letdown after another. With Kevin Anderson, Elizabeth Lawrence, and Nancy Fish. The score, by Jerry Goldsmith, keeps plugging away at ominousness.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

The Vanishing—George Sluizer's film has a simple, powerful thriller hook: a young Dutch woman, Saskia (the radiant Johanna Ter Steege), vacationing in the South of France with her boyfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets), walks into a highway rest stop to buy soda and beer and never comes back. Rex's search for Saskia, which takes place over several years, produces suspense of an unusually melancholy kind. This fiendishly intelligent little movie is adapted from a novel called "The Golden Egg," by the Dutch writer Tim Krabbé (who collaborated with Sluizer on the adaptation), and its form is essentially literary. It's a sophisticated example of the sort of hermetic intellectual mysteries that Borges is famous for; the fates of Saskia and Rex are worked out with an almost geometric precision. But the movie's rigor isn't alienating, and its symmetries are evocative rather than merely clever. This film is about ordinary lives interrupted, hijacked out of time, and Sluizer, with documentary-style attentiveness to detail, does justice to the varied beauty of ordinariness. The narrative is constructed with flawless elegance, but the movie is far less self-contained than it seems: traces of deep feeling keep escaping from the artifice, like puffs of breath into cold, thin air, and these wispy, ephemeral indications of unself-conscious life haunt us when the story is over. Not many thrillers have the sort of suggestiveness this picture has. It's a small classic. Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu gives a chilling performance as the perverse, enigmatic villain. In Dutch and French.—T.R. (1/28/91) (Cinema 12.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3.)

A Woman of Affairs (1928)—Greta Garbo was never more rapturous than in this adaptation of Michael Arlen's 1924 novel "The Green Hat." She and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., are cast as sister and brother, and with their matching profiles they're probably the most glamorous sister-and-brother look-alikes in film history. Garbo plays a daring, sleekly groomed woman of the twenties who isn't considered good enough to marry the handsome, aristocratic stiff (John Gilbert) whom she loves. It turns out that she has the finer code of honor. But Garbo transcends this moral framework: as a woman in love, she has a sensuality that's dreamlike—it knows no bounds. (Watch her in the hospital scene.) The cast includes John Mack Brown, Lewis Stone, Hobart Bosworth, and Dorothy Sebastian. Directed by Clarence Brown, from a script by Bess Meredyth. It's an elegantly sumptuous M-G-M production, with cinematography by William Daniels, art direction by Cedric Gibbons, and gowns by Adrian. Silent, but it was also made available in a version (being shown here) with added sound effects and music.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Feb. 17-19.)

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

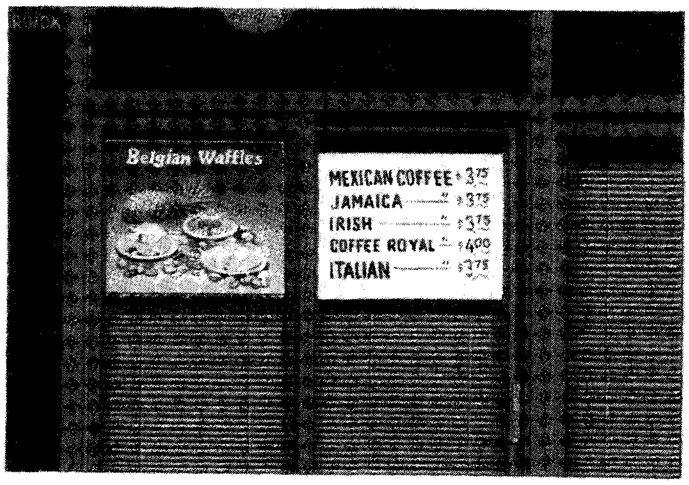
Notes and Comment

SINCE the night the war began, we've been thinking about civilizations. We had a jolt when we saw the little black shapes of bombers on a TV map of Iraq and realized that the announcer was talking about ancient Mesopotamia. In the classrooms of our youth, we loved that word. We rolled it on our tongue like taffy, along with the euphonious names of its rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the nature of its soil, "alluvial."

"Where are the books about ancient history?" we asked our friend Molly Wamp, a librarian at the St. Agnes branch of the New York Public Library, at Amsterdam Avenue and Eighty-first Street.

"What we have would be over there, in the nine-thirties section," she said, waving an arm. "Or underneath the window."

The St. Agnes branch gives an impression of homely clutter, but Molly Wamp gives an impression of knowing her way around it even in the dark. She is a gray-haired woman who wears a hearing aid. She walks a little stiffly, but she still moves fast. At a borrower's request, she seems to whirr across the crowded floor like clockwork to pull out a book and hand it over with a look of triumph. She plunges into books like a baker into dough, a potter into clay. These dust jackets, these call numbers, these sometimes patched-up spines, these chapters, these pages (with, yes, a trace of breakfast, or some marginalia that violate the rules about mutilations and defacements), these *words* are her raw material.



A scholar three thousand years from now, the counterpart of the scholar today trying to make out life in the once magnificent Mesopotamian cities of Nineveh and Ur, could learn a lot from the St. Agnes Library. The people of the Upper West Side of Manhattan congregate here, at the end of the twentieth century. People of every age and race, mostly not too rich, cram together in a smallish room in order to read. Getting a seat at one of the venerable and sturdy oak tables is never easy. Elderly men look up from their newspapers to watch small children carefully climb the fine old staircase to the picture books. Frail old ladies move down aisles of mysteries and romance, pulling shopping carts behind them.

The door of the St. Agnes branch is made of steel, with a glass viewing panel. It's an ugly, modern door, at odds with the graceful old building. It speaks of present-day New York, and not the New York of Andrew Carnegie, who gave the money for the place at the beginning of the century. It's a storefront-drug-program door, a Mafia-social-club door—a valve continually opening and closing between the life of the streets and the life of the written word. The bottom half is scratched and dented, as if the old ladies had rushed out in a human wave, using the spiky legs of their mystery-filled carts as battering rams. Outside the door, a homeless man will sometimes get a friend to guard his shopping cart holding his can collection while he goes inside and sits down for a while at a table. (The variety of the carts and the strangeness of their contents might baffle that future scholar of our civilization.)

Molly Wamp's hearing sometimes makes her seem cross when she's really just flustered. If need be, though, she will give you a look that brooks no nonsense. There are the rules and regulations. No loud voices or obscene language. No sleeping, gambling, or sexual acts. No standing about or aimless lingering. No alcohol, no smoking, and definitely no hallucinogens. One look from Molly Wamp could make a man shape up; she was raised in Naples, New York, which we imagine as a place of tree-lined streets, where men were men and librarians were ladies. She has a widowed sister who still lives in Naples, New York, and comes down from time to time for a visit.

Right at the start of "World Civilizations," a big, fat book, here's Mesopotamia. As early as 3500 B.C., when most of the world was still preliterate, the Fertile Crescent between the Tigris and the Euphrates was home to a complex society and ushered in the Protoliterate Age. Mesopotamia had a written language—the wedges of the cuneiform—for use in a fancy system of laws and business regulations. It knew the secrets of metal smelting, mathematics, astronomy, rudimentary physics. It had an excellent climate for the commodity that was the harmless equal of oil back then—the fruit of the date palm. Between 3500 and 539 B.C., when the Mesopotamian civilization was swallowed up by the Persians under Cyrus the Great, empires conquered empires; kings, religions, and armies came and went.

"Battles? Which battles are you talking about?" We looked over at Molly Wamp, who was closely questioning a teen-age boy. He was working on a term paper. She plunged across the room with him in tow, and they dived into the encyclopedias and the Civil War. In the seat next to ours, a young Asian girl chewed on her pen, then lowered her head of dark, shiny hair to the letter she was writing on some paper with a lacy frill. The man across from her was moving his lips as he read the *Post*. "U.S. ADMITS 'FRIENDLY FIRE' KILLED 7 MARINES," we read in a headline upside down.

In Mesopotamia, the Sumerians came first, and were the most creative. The arch, the vault, the dome were their inventions, and they discovered multiplication, division, and even the square root. The Old Babylonians, who took over from them, brought the famous legal Code of Hammurabi and the epic of Gilgamesh. Next were the Kassites; they were cultural barbarians, but they introduced the horse. Then came the turn of the Assyrians—ferocious warriors, who made the state into a standing army, a military machine. The Assyrians made astounding advances in armaments: "Iron swords . . . long lances . . . fortresses on wheels, and metal breastplates, shields, and helmets were only a few examples of their superior equipment." They terrified their neighbors, and were known for their quality of "frightfulness": "Upon soldiers captured in battle, and sometimes upon noncombatants as well, they inflicted unspeakable cruelties."

As the seats around us emptied, new occupants slipped in. A black man sat very upright, very dignified. He was homeless: at his feet was his pack with all he owned—a neat bag, with a blanket squarely folded and strapped to the top. He sat behind a stack of copies of *Art & Antiques*. He peeled back the cover of one and gazed down at some eighteenth-century furniture, all ormolu and marquetry.

The Assyrians were so violent that their enemies got together at last and took dreadful vengeance on them: "Seldom has the decline of an empire been so complete. . . . Assyria's period of imperial splendor lasted little more than a century." They vanished without trace, but not before conceiving of latitude and longitude. The Chaldeans came last of all to Mesopotamia, in 612 B.C. They were astrologers, with a rather gloomy religion, and they invented the seven-day week.

We looked up, elbow on the table, chin in hand. We'd been walking on upper Broadway the night the war began. "We're bombin' the hell out of Baghdad!" said a man bumbling out of a bar. There was an eerie silence in the city, a yellow-green mist rolling in from the river, under the streetlights. Time split open that night, stood still. A homeless man came lurching out of the mist. "*Street News! Street News!*" he cried, but nobody heard. Civilization, forgetting where it came from, was busy smashing its cradle to bits.

Because of the drastic city-budget cuts, the St. Agnes branch has posted a notice announcing that, beginning on April 1st, the metal door will be locked all day on Saturdays.

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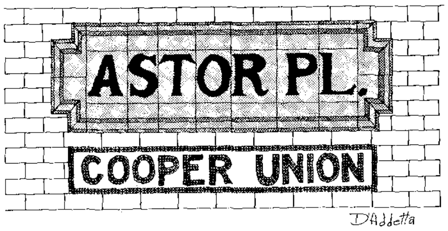
Script

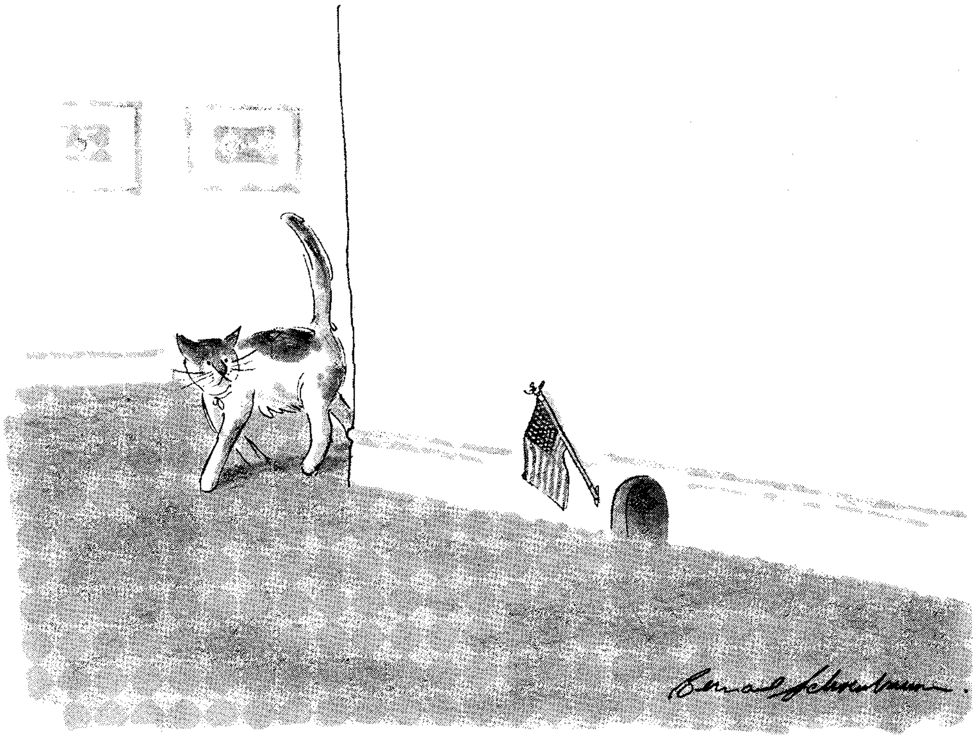
IF you happened to find yourself in Japan on a Saturday night, you might be startled to turn on a radio and hear the voice of Charlie (the Burgerman) Burger, a disk jockey at WBLS in New York City. "Hi," you would hear. "This is Charlie Burger of WBLS, in the Big Apple, on the KDD Sound Call Request Line, live in New York. The line is open till 2 A.M., so call right now, and dial carefully, 001-1-212-697-6256. I'll be playing your requests on J-Wave." J-Wave is an FM radio station in Tokyo, and the KDD Sound Call Request Line is part of a popular show called "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001." The number that Charlie gives out on the air is a direct-dial number from Japan to New York. KDD, the show's sponsor, is a Japanese telephone company. "Come on, now," Charlie says. "Don't be shy. You can call right now. I'm the Burgerman."



Hey, you might think, is this a miracle of modern technology, or what? Here you are, all the way over in Japan, worn out from a hard day of marvelling that Tokyo cab drivers wear white gloves and don't accept tips, and here on the local radio, taking requests for your favorite tunes, is a disk jockey who works around the corner from your dentist's office in Manhattan. You've really got to hand it to the Japanese for putting together a technical stunt like this. You can only imagine the high-tech gear—probably including a satellite and a couple of those transponder things—that make it happen. Just think about the difference in time zones alone! Somebody's got to be wearing one of those watches with two faces.

Actually, no. It turns out that there are two ways you can produce a call-in song-request radio show in New York City for broadcast to Japan. You can hire Charlie Burger, put him in a studio with all that technical gear, and broadcast to Japan. Or you can do it the way the producers of "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001" do it:

First, arrange to put the show on the air in Japan. "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001" is broadcast weekly on J-Wave (81.3 on your dial in Tokyo) and on FM-802 in Osaka, stations that between them reach half the country's population. The show's hostess is Yu Hayami, a perky Japanese-American woman in her early twenties, who used to be a singing idol and performs most of her hostess duties on "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001" in English. English, after a fashion, is very chic in Japan, and J-Wave was a pioneer in the use of English-speaking disk jockeys. Its current lineup includes seven Japanese-Americans, ten other Americans, a Canadian, and a Russian. The Russian broadcasts in English, too. In addition to "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001," the J-Wave schedule includes shows called "Trend Produce," "Weekend Splash," and "Classy Air Current." The use of English is "new wave, the new popular thing," says Shoko Okamura, a happy-looking woman who works in New York as a producer of both "Trend Produce" and "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001."



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Second, station two young Japanese women in New York City to field song requests from your listeners. On a recent Saturday morning (when it's Saturday night in Japan, it's Saturday morning in New York), Etsuko Nagaki and Kiyoko Ikeda sat next to telephones in a one-bedroom apartment that had been converted into an office, in a high-rise building on East Fortieth Street. At 10:06 A.M., the first call came in. A thirty-year-old English teacher in Tokyo wanted to request "My Love Is a Fire," by Donny Osmond, for her boyfriend, who was living in Chicago or Iowa, she wasn't sure which. Then a drunk businessman called from a bar in Tokyo to request "A Dreams a Dream," by Soul II Soul, and to mention, as long as he had somebody on the line, that he didn't like his boss and he didn't like his job. Some of the callers were surprised to learn that they had called New York City. Some of them asked Nagaki or Ikeda if she was Yu Hayami. The suggestion that she might be a glamorous star like Yu Hayami always makes Ikeda laugh. "I am a boring travel agent," she says.

Third, fax the list of requested songs from East Fortieth Street to the Tokyo office of Tsutomu (Tom) Takeyama, the Japan-based producer of "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001," and have him write an English-language script, complete with phonetic pronunciations of Japanese names. One of Tom's recent scripts looked, in part, like this: "Here is the most hottest artist not only in the U.S., but also all over the world. M. C. Hammer with his latest smash hit 'Pray' and it was requested from Saori Suzuki (SAH-OH-KEE SUE-ZOO-KEY) of Naniwaku (NAH-KNEE-WAH-COU)."

Fourth, fax Tom's script back from Tokyo to the converted apartment in the building on East Fortieth Street, where it is received by Shoko Okamura.

Fifth, carry the script three blocks to Charlie Burger's office at WBLS. Okamura does this herself. Once, when she forgot a page of the script and Charlie's wife had to stop in and pick it up during a Manhattan shopping trip, Okamura apologized profusely and bought Mrs. Burger a bottle of perfume. Okamura says that Burger was hired to do the show because his voice is so *shibui*. She and her two full-time associates—Etsuko Nagaki and a Japanese-speaking Dutch woman named Susanna Kempees—recently spent several minutes trying to explain to a visitor what *shibui* means. "It's a very nice voice, very low, like Humphrey Bogart," Okamura ventured. Kempees punched the word into a pocket electronic Japanese-English dictionary and read from the screen: "Sexy, distinguished." Okamura concurred, saying, "Sexy voice. Low." Kempees kept reading: "Astringent, husky." Nagaki added, "Warm," and Okamura said, "Of course, warm. And so he was selected."

Sixth, give Charlie Burger a couple of days to study the script. "I don't read it verbatim," he says. "When I first started, Tom would have something like 'O.K., all you dancing freaks, it's time to get up.' I didn't feel comfortable saying that, so I would just cross it out. So he didn't put it in anymore." Charlie considers himself lucky that Tom doesn't mind his tinkering with the script. Two other disk jockeys at WBLS also do radio shows on tape for Japanese stations, and they are required to follow their scripts precisely. "I was surprised that the Japanese are so into American culture," Charlie says. "It's interesting, because it wasn't that long ago we were enemies—I mean, really, when you think about it."

Seventh, call Charlie Burger at his home, in Oakland, New Jersey. Every Sunday night at seven, when it's Monday morning in Tokyo, Tom Takeyama cues up a tape recorder in his office and calls Charlie's house. Charlie is getting ready for bed, since he does the WBLS morning show at five-thirty and has to get up early. He takes Tom's call on the phone in his bedroom, and he reads the script. Then he hangs up and goes to sleep.

Eighth, in your Tokyo studio splice Charlie's voice in with the requested songs and the rest of "KDD Sound Call—Dancin' Freak 001."

Ninth, five days later broadcast the show in Japan.

Tenth, repeat Steps Two through Nine.

Stamping Ground

IN most parts of the country, at the precise moment when the United States Postal Service officially switched from the twenty-five- to the twenty-nine-cent stamp last weekend no one saw or heard a thing. It was like crossing the International Date Line in a plane; hardly anyone noticed. But in New York the era of the twenty-nine-cent stamp came in with a little late-night rustle, because the James A. Farley Post Office, on Eighth Avenue between Thirty-first and Thirty-third Streets, was open when the transition took place.

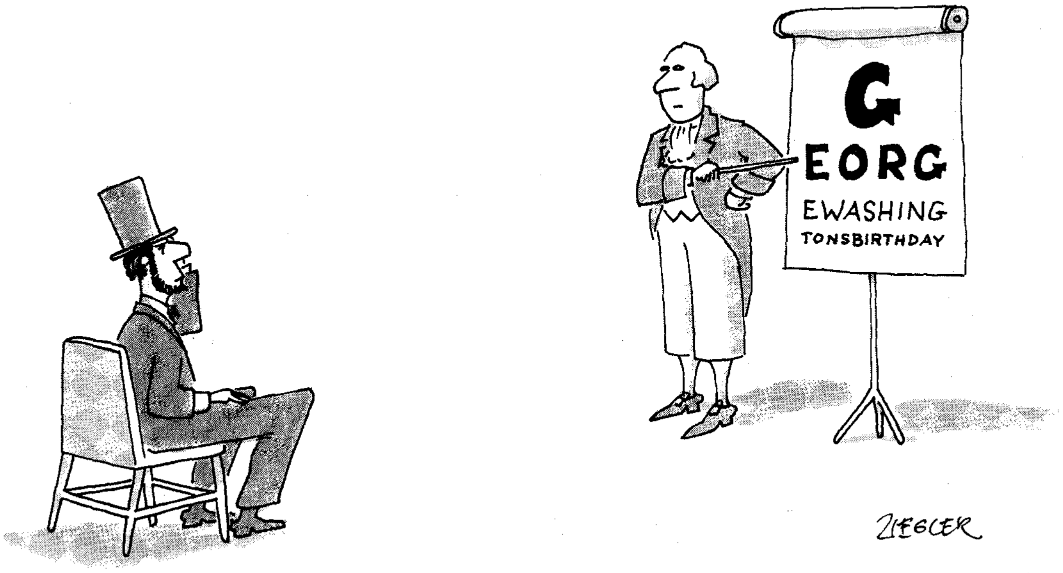
On that historic Saturday night, we walked down to the Farley to take a look at the crowd and say goodbye to the old rates and hello to the new. Standing in line about half an hour before the official changeover, we found ourself behind two women who had just Amtraked into Penn Station, across the street, had heard that the Farley was open, and had rushed over to get off a few twenty-five-centers before midnight. As we were about to ask them where they were from, Stefan Gedal, a fast-talking, wiry man from Forest Hills, jumped into the conversation. "Did you know that this is one of only two or three post offices in the Northeast that are open twenty-four hours?" he said. The women were clearly impressed, so he went on, "As a matter of fact, it's the largest post office in the world," and he added, "You see, I'm in the mail-order business."

Actually, the James A. Farley Post Office *used* to be the largest post office in the world; now it's just among the country's top three. But there is almost always someone mailing something at the Farley, so the place has a feel akin to that of a late-night diner. The guards seem to get cheerier as the evening rolls on, and more disposed to chat. The traffic gets more interesting. "At night, what we have is sort of a Dew Drop Inn situation," we were told by Lieutenant Robert Warren, the police officer in charge of the lobby that night, who has been with the Postal Service for thirty years. "People come from Long Island, they come from Westchester—any time they have a letter that just has to be stamped by a particular day. They come from all over, because we're the only place open."

Not that there aren't plenty of non-postal reasons to drop by the Farley late at night. At night, for instance, bright lights wash its great, long flight of steps and its twenty fifty-three-foot-tall Corinthian columns. Around midnight, when pedestrian traffic wears down to a flurry, the Farley looks almost Parthenonesque. And whereas the main source of entertainment at most post offices is getting letters and parcels weighed and buying stamps, the Farley has many of the attractions of a major museum. Engraved on the outside walls are inscriptions to history's great postal patrons: Cyrus the Great, Augustus, Nerva, Charlemagne, Louis XI, Alexander Hamilton, Cardinal Richelieu, and Sir Rowland Hill, the founder of the English Penny Post. On the lobby ceiling are coats of arms for ten countries, including one called Austro-Hungary—a reminder that the building was opened in 1914. On the night of Saturday, February 2nd, though, everyone at the Farley was strictly concerned with the midnight deadline.

"I'm just trying to save these non-profits a little money," said Victoria Leacock, who was sending out as many membership-drive letters for the Anthology Film Archives as she could. (She is its new festival director.) By eleven-forty-five, she had been there an hour and had mailed off eight hundred, saving the film library about thirty-two dollars. Lieutenant Warren guessed that two bearded guys who were pumping out stamps with their hand-held stampers had mailed something like fifteen hundred letters in an hour and a half. With six minutes left, John Cavanagh, an actor in Manhattan, dropped a few dozen postcard pictures of himself into a big dirty-white mailbag. "When I came here the night before my taxes were due last year, it was about the only thing I hadn't experienced in New York," he said. "It was wild. It was like the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. But tonight I'm here just out of principle." Stefan Gedal was already the owner of several twenty-nine-cent "F" stamps, which he had bought in Forest Hills that afternoon, and had come mostly out of professional curiosity. "I came to the city to see friends, and I figured I'd drop by here, too—you know, make it a double trip," he said.

With four minutes left, people were wrapping up. The Farley's bright-red digital clocks were blinking different times, but, luckily, we had synchronized our watch with the radio. Five new police officers came from somewhere upstairs for a changing of the postal guard. With two minutes left, an additional service window opened up, presumably to take any overflow, but there were only eight of us still waiting —not counting Victoria Leacock, who was still stamping, and the bearded men, who, like their stamping machines, had quite possibly lost all track of time. People in the line criticized the new stamps. "Why did it have to be 'F'?" one woman asked rhetorically. "Why couldn't they have skipped right to 'G'?" A man in a long, dark coat dashed in, dumped his mail in a bag, and dashed out.



Finally, with absolutely no fanfare, no sudden rush of air, the new postal rate came in, and a few seconds later we were face to face with our clerk. We remarked on the complexities of multiplying the number twenty-nine after being spoiled for so long by a nice, easy twenty-five. She just smiled. We added hopefully that we thought we might be the first to have a letter stamped with the new rate. She shook her head, but then looked at her watch and said, “Yes, that’s right. Congratulations.”

“I hear you may do a baby.”

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De-Acquisitioning

Herbert Clement, the director of the Central Park Children’s Zoo, retires on February 16th. He’s leaving at an unhappy moment in the zoo’s thirty-year history. Unless the Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Betsy Gotbaum, can raise funds to install a new heating system and repair the vest-pocket park’s crumbling fairy-tale buildings and miniature barnyard pens and sties, the Children’s Zoo will soon close. There is a possibility that the New York Zoological Society will take control and remodel the place, but if that happens the zoo will shut down anyway, for the transition, and the fifty-odd animals now on exhibit will be permanently resettled. Mr. Clement’s last job is finding homes for them.

These animals are difficult to find homes for, because most of them are as mundane as the creatures you see in a roadside petting zoo or a corner pet shop. Mr. Clement is very well aware that no zoo director will be excited by the opportunity to acquire a chicken, a gerbil, or a goat, and it’s against Parks and Recreation rules for the animals to be given away to private homes. It’s also against the rules for the zoo to reveal exactly where they will be sent. “Every animal here has a fan club,” Mr. Clement said the other day, and he explained that in the past animal lovers used to track down favorite de-acquisitioned creatures and pester the new owners about their welfare.

The only animal who will go to a private home if the zoo closes is Joefus, the yellow-footed tortoise: he will take up residence in the Upper East Side apartment of Mr. Clement. “I am a turtle nut,” Mr. Clement confessed, and he told us that he had developed his passion years ago in Boston, where he owned Mildred, a tortoise, who used to enjoy a daily creep along Boylston Street to Copley Square. “Everyone knew her,” he said, sighing, and he added that Joefus had a long way to go before he could fill Mildred’s shell. Peering into Joefus’s aquarium, he saw the tortoise staring zombielike at a tray of ripe tomato wedges. “He really is a dullard,” Mr. Clement said. “But even if he is just a doorstop I love him. You know those hearts people used to carve on trees? That’s us: Joefus and Herb together forever.”

Godzilla, the four-foot-long iguana, is going to a professional breeder, and so are Spanky, the blue-and-yellow macaw, and Lorita, the Amazon parrot. Betsy, the Holstein calf (named, with affection, after Commissioner Gotbaum), will be returned to her original home, an upstate dairy farm. Laurie, the overweight African pygmy donkey, is going to another zoo, and Albert, the Nubian goat, is going to a farm museum. The hybrid leghorn chickens and the Rhode Island Red rooster were especially difficult to place, but recently Mr. Clement heard from an upstate farm that might be willing to take them. Finding a home for the raccoons was also a real headache: any zoo that wants raccoons has them, and asking someone in the country or a suburb—where they are thought of as pests—to take a raccoon is a little like asking a New Yorker to adopt a cockroach. Mr. Clement, however, has found a wildlife refuge that will try to retrain them to live free and has agreed that if the attempt fails they will receive life care. The most difficult placement problem of all was presented by Edgar, the raven, who has been at the Children’s Zoo since it opened, and a female pied crow, named Crow, who shares Edgar’s cage. Despite the name, Edgar is a female, and several years ago she fell in love with Crow. Cross-species couples and same-sex couples are frowned on by conservationists, who believe that a zoo’s role is to encourage the propagation of species, but Mr. Clement refuses to separate Edgar and Crow. “They both lay eggs, and sit on top of each other in the nest,” he said. “So I kept at it until I found a place that will let them stay together.”

It was a chilly morning, and Mr. Clement looked out the window of his office to see just a handful of parents and children touring the ramshackle storybook exhibits. As he spoke, he stroked Smokey, a former stray cat now listed on the registry as an official zoo animal. “The plaster whale needs paint, the roof on the gingerbread house is caving in, and the castle has been closed because there are cracks in its walls,” he said. “This is the last of the old zoos here. Like me, it’s coming apart at the seams.” Nonetheless, Mr. Clement intends to be on hand after his retirement day to make certain that the animals get where they are supposed to go. “I will not leave this zoo until the last gerbil has a home,” he declared, as resolutely as a general leading his last campaign.

PRUE has folded two red bandanna handkerchiefs into triangles and tied them together at one set of corners. The second set of corners is tied behind her back, the third around her neck. She's wrapped another bandanna, a blue one, around her head and made a little reef knot at the front. Now she's strutting the length of the dock, in her improvised halter top and her wide-legged white shorts, her sunglasses with the white plastic frames, her platform sandals.

"It's the forties look," she says to George, hand on her hip, doing a pirouette. "Rosie the Riveter. From the war. Remember her?"

George, whose name is not really George, does not remember. He spent the forties rooting through garbage heaps and begging, and doing other things unsuitable for a child. He has a dim memory of some film star posed on a calendar tattering on a latrine wall. Maybe this is the one Prue means. He remembers for an instant his intense resentment of the bright, ignorant smile, the well-fed body. A couple of buddies had helped him take her apart with the rusty blade from a kitchen knife they'd found somewhere in the rubble. He does not consider telling any of this to Prue.

George is sitting in a green-and-white striped canvas deck chair, reading the *Financial Post* and drinking Scotch. The ashtray beside him overflows with butts: many women have tried to cure him of smoking; many have failed. He looks up at Prue from behind his paper and smiles his foxy smile. This is a smile he does with the cigarette held right in the center of his mouth: on either side of it his lips curl back, revealing teeth. He has long canines, miraculously still his.

"You weren't born then," he says. This isn't true, but he never misses the chance to bestow a compliment when there's one just lying around. What does it cost? Not a cent, which is something the men in this country have never figured out. Prue's tanned midriff is on a level with his face; it's still firm, still flexible and lithe. At that age his mother had gone soft—loose-fleshed and velvety, like an aging plum. These days they eat a lot of vegetables, they work out, they last longer.

Prue lowers the sunglasses to the end of her nose and looks at him over the plastic rims. "George, you are totally shameless," she says. "You always were." She gives him an innocent smile, a mischievous smile, a smile with a twist of real evil in it. It's a smile that wavers like a gasoline slick on water, shining, changing tone.

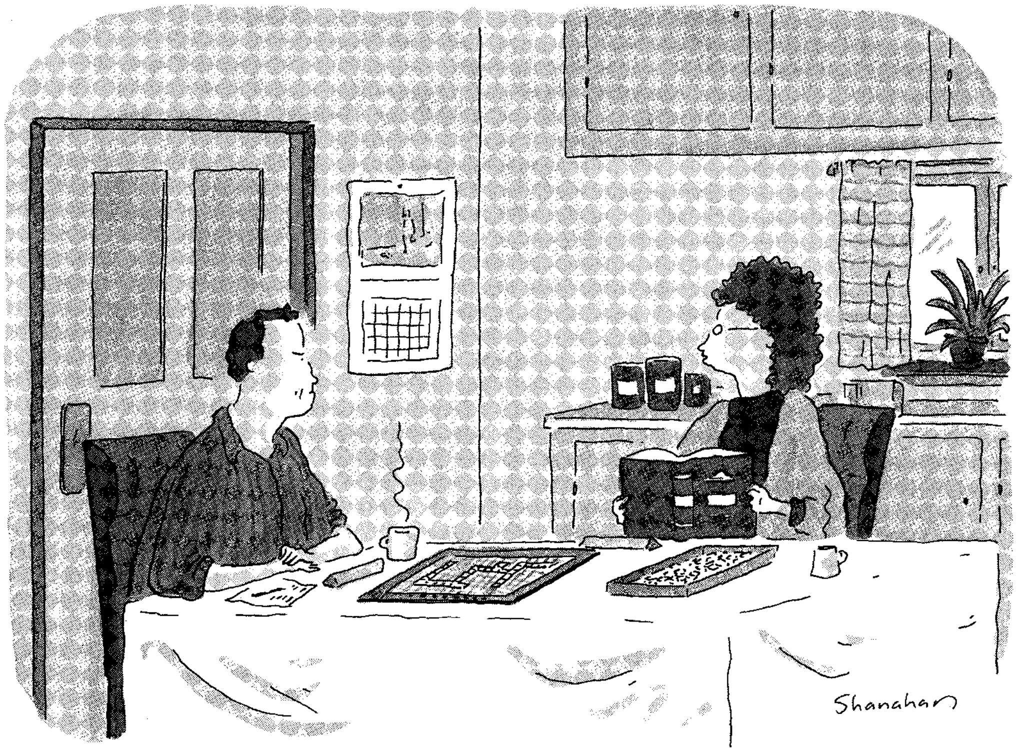
This smile of Prue's was the first interesting thing George stumbled over when he hit Toronto, back in the late fifties. It was at a party thrown by a real-estate developer with Eastern European connections. He'd been invited because refugees from Hungary were considered noteworthy back then, right after the uprising. At that time he was young, thin as a snake, with a dangerous-looking scar over one eye and a few bizarre stories. A collectible. Prue had been there in an off-the-shoulder black dress. She'd raised her glass to him, looked over the rim, hoisted the smile like a flag.

The smile is still an invitation, but it's not something George will follow up on—not here, not now. Later, in the city, perhaps. But this lake, this peninsula, Wacousta Lodge itself, are his refuge, his monastery, his sacred ground. Here he will perform no violations.

"Why is it you cannot bear to accept a gift?" says George. Smoke blows into his eyes; he squints. "If I were younger, I would kneel. I would kiss both your hands. Believe me."

Prue, who has known him to do these things back in more impetuous times, turns on her heel. "It's lunchtime," she says. "That's what I came to tell you." She has heard refusal.

George watches her white shorts and her still shapely thighs (with, however, their faint stippling of dimpled fat) going wink, wink, wink through the clear sunlight, past the boathouse, along the stone path, up the hill to the house. From up there a bell is ringing: the lunch bell. For once in her life, Prue is telling the truth.

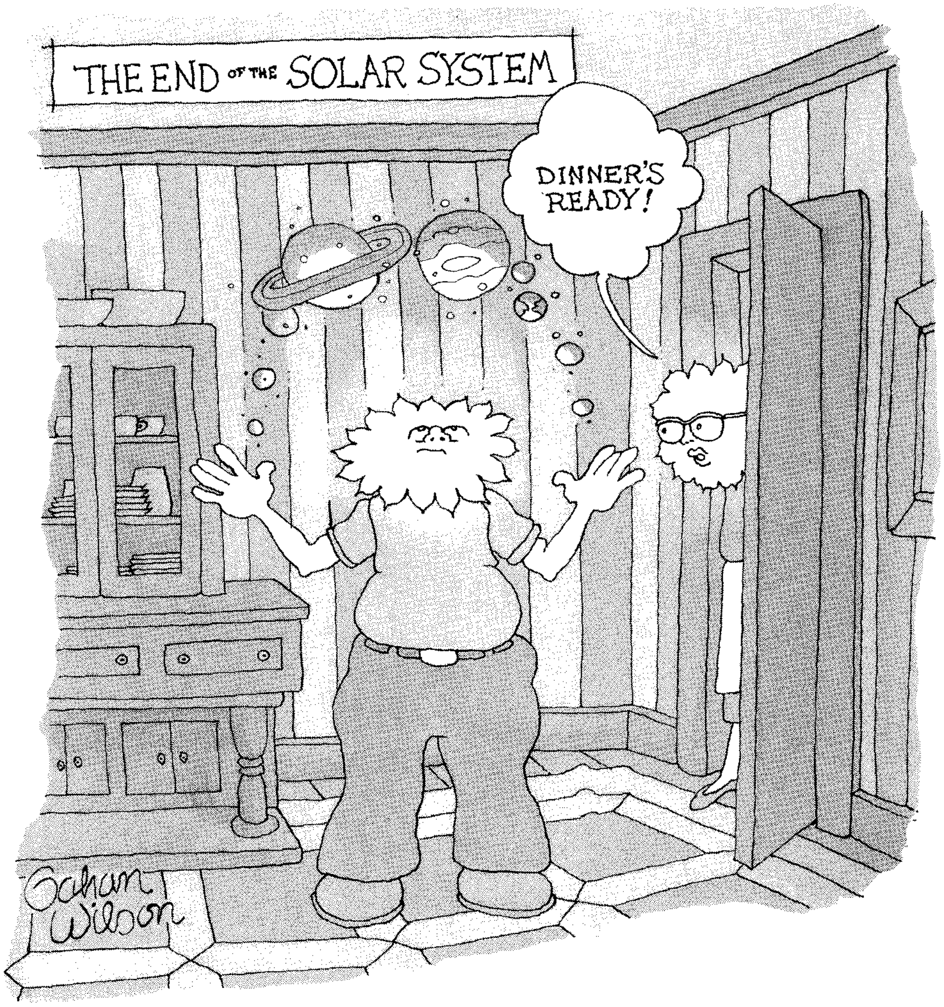


"Mr. Webster and I are, once again, in complete agreement."

GEORGE takes one more look at the paper. Quebec is talking Separatism; there are Mohawks behind the barricades near Montreal, and people are throwing stones at them; word is the country is falling apart. George is not worried: he's been in countries that were falling apart before. There can be opportunities. As for the fuss people here make about language, he doesn't understand it. What's a second language, or a third, or a fourth? George himself speaks five, if you count Russian, which he would prefer not to. As for the stone-throwing, it's typical. Not bombs, not bullets: just stones. Even the uproar here is muted.

He scratches his belly under the loose shirt he wears; he's been gaining a little too much around the middle. Then he stubs out his cigarette, downs the heel of his Scotch, and hauls himself out of his deck chair. Carefully, he folds the chair and places it inside the boathouse: a wind could come up, the chair could be sent sailing into the lake. He treats the possessions and rituals of Wacousta Lodge with a tenderness, a reverence, that would baffle those who know him only in the city. Despite what some would call his unorthodox business practices, he is in some ways a conservative man; he loves traditions. They are thin on the ground in this country, but he knows one when he sees one, and does it homage. The deck chairs here are like the escutcheons elsewhere.

As he walks up the hill, more slowly than he used to, he hears the sound of wood being split behind the kitchen wing. He hears a truck on the highway that runs along the side of the lake; he hears wind in the white pines. He hears a loon. He remembers the first time he heard one, and hugs himself. He has done well.



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WACOUSTA LODGE is a large, oblong, one-story structure with board-and-batten walls stained a dark reddish brown. It was built in the first years of the century by the family's great-grandfather, who made a bundle on the railways. He included a maid's room and a cook's room at the back, although no maid or cook had ever been induced to stay in them, not to George's knowledge, certainly not in recent years. The great-grandfather's craggy, walrus-whiskered face, frowning above the constriction of a stiff collar, hangs oval-framed in the washroom, which is equipped only with a sink and a ewer. George can remember a zinc bathtub, but it's been retired. Baths take place in the lake. For the rest, there's an outhouse, placed discreetly behind a clump of spruce.

What a lot of naked and semi-naked bodies the old man must have seen over the years, thinks George, lathering his hands, and how he must have disapproved of them. At least the old boy isn't condemned to the outhouse: that would be too much for him. George makes a small, superstitious, oddly Japanese bow toward the great-grandfather as he goes out the door. He always does this. The presence of this scowling ancestral totem is one of the reasons he behaves himself, more or less, up here.

THE table for lunch is set on the wide, screened-in veranda at the front of the house, overlooking the lake. Prue is not sitting at it, but her two sisters are: dry-faced Pamela, the eldest, and soft Portia, the youngest of the three and George's own wife. There is also Roland, the brother, large, rounded, and balding. George, who is not all that fond of men on purely social occasions because there are few ways he can manipulate them, gives Roland a polite nod and turns the full force of his vulpine smile upon the two women. Pamela, who distrusts him, sits up straight and pretends not to notice. Portia smiles at him, a wistful, vague smile, as if he were a cloud. Roland ignores him, though not on purpose, because Roland has the inner life of a tree, or possibly of a stump. George can never tell what Roland is thinking, or even if he is thinking at all.

"Isn't the weather marvellous?" George says to Pamela. He has learned over the years that the weather is the proper opening topic here for any conversation at all. Pamela is too well brought up to refuse an answer to a direct question.

"If you like postcards," she says. "At least it's not snowing." Pamela has recently been appointed a Dean of Women, a title George has not yet figured out completely. The Oxford Dictionary has informed him that a dean might be the head of ten monks in a monastery, or "as tr. med. L. *decanus*, applied to the *teoðing-ealdor*, the headman of a *tenmannetale*." Much of what Pamela says sounds more or less like this: incomprehensible, though it might turn out to have a meaning if studied.

George would like to go to bed with Pamela, not because she is beautiful—she is much too rectilinear and slab-shaped for his tastes, she has no bottom at all, and her hair is the color of dried grass—but because he has never done it. Also, he wants to know what she would say. His interest in her is anthropological. Or perhaps geological: she would have to be scaled, like a glacier.

"Did you have a nice read?" says Portia. "I hope you didn't get sunburned. Is there any news?"

"If you can call it news," says Pamela. "That paper's a week old. Why is 'news' plural? Why don't we say 'olds'?"

"George likes old stuff," says Prue, coming in with a platter of food. She's put on a man's white shirt over her kerchief arrangement but hasn't done it up. "Lucky for us ladies, eh? Gobble up, everyone. It's yummy cheese-and-chutney sandwiches and yummy sardines. George? Beer or acid rain?"

George drinks a beer, and eats and smiles, eats and smiles, while the family talks around him—all but Roland, who absorbs his nutriments in silence, gazing out at the lake through the trees, his eyes immobile. George sometimes thinks Roland can change color slightly to blend in with his backgrounds; unlike George himself, who is doomed to stand out.

Pamela is complaining again about the stuffed birds. There are three of them, kept under glass bells in the living room: a duck, a loon, a grouse. These were the bright ideas of the grandfather, meant to go with the generally lodgelike décor: the mangy bearskin rug, complete with claws and head; the miniature birchbark canoe on the mantelpiece; the snowshoes, cracked and drying, crossed above the fireplace; the Hudson's Bay blanket nailed to the wall and beset by moths. Pamela is sure the stuffed birds will get moths, too.

"They're probably a sea of maggots, inside," she says, and George tries to picture what a sea of maggots would look like. It's her metaphoric leaps, her tangled verbal stringworks, that confuse him.

"They're hermetically sealed," says Prue. "You know: nothing goes in, nothing comes out. Like nuns."

"Don't be revolting," says Pamela. "We should check them for frass."

"Who, the nuns?" says Prue.

"What is frass?" says George.

"Maggot excrement," says Pamela, not looking at him. "We could have them freeze-dried."

"Would it work?" says Prue.

FEBRUARY 14TH

Awakening at dawn thirty-
six years ago, I see
the lifting of her eyelids
welcome me home. I can
recall her long arms en-
circling me, and I reach
out until the moment slides
into all the forgotten hours.
All the rest of our lives
the tree outside that window
groans in the wind. In other
rooms we'll hear other houses
mutter and won't care, and
go on hearing and not
caring until our names
merge with the wind. One
room, bare, uncurtained,
in a city long ago lost,
goes with us into the wide
measureless light. A tune
goes with us, too. Hear
it in the little weirs
collecting winter waters,
in the drops of frozen rain
ticking from the eaves to
pool in the tiny valleys
of their making. Six weeks,
and the wide world is green.

—Philip Levine

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Prue, who in the city is the first with trends—the first white kitchen, the first set of giant shoulder pads, the first leather pants suit have been hers over the years—is here as resistant to change as the rest of them. She wants everything on this peninsula to stay exactly the way it always has been. And it does, though with a gradual decline into shabbiness. George doesn't mind the shabbiness, however. Wacousta Lodge is a little slice of the past, an alien past. He feels privileged.

A motorboat goes by, one of the plastic-hulled, high-speed kind, far too close. Even Roland flinches. The wake jostles the dock.

"I hate those," says Portia, who hasn't shown much interest in the stuffed-bird question. "Another sandwich, dear?"

"It was so lovely and quiet here during the war," says Pamela. "You should have been here, George." She says this accusingly, as if it's his fault he wasn't. "Hardly any motorboats, because of the gas rationing. More canoes. Of course, the road wasn't built then, there was only the train. I wonder why we say 'train of thought' but never 'car of thought'?"

"And rowboats," says Prue. "I think all those motorboat people should be taken out and shot. At least the ones who go too fast." Prue herself drives like a maniac, but only on land.

George, who has seen many people taken out and shot, though not for driving motorboats, smiles, and helps himself to a sardine. He once shot three men himself, though only two of them were strictly necessary. The third was a precaution. He still feels uneasy about that, about the possibly harmless one with his too innocent informer's eyes, his shirtfront dappled with blood. But there would be little point in mentioning that, at lunch or at any other time. George has no desire to be startling.

It was Prue who brought him north, brought him here, during their affair, the first one. (How many affairs have there been? Can they be separated, or are they really one long affair, with interruptions, like a string of sausages? The interruptions were Prue's marriages, which never lasted long, possibly because she was monogamous during them. He would know when a marriage was nearing its end: the phone at his office would ring and it would be Prue, saying, "George. I can't do it. I've been so good, but I just can't go on. He comes into the bathroom when I'm flossing my teeth. I long to be in an elevator with you, stuck between floors. Tell me something *filthy*. I hate love, don't you?")

HIS first time here he was led in chains, trailed in Prue's wake, like a barbarian in a Roman triumph. A definite capture, also a deliberate outrage. He was supposed to alarm Prue's family, and he did, though not on purpose. His English was not good, his hair was too glossy, his shoes too pointed, his clothes too sharply pressed. He wore dark glasses, kissed hands. The mother was alive then, though not the father; so there were four women ranged against him, with no help at all from the impenetrable Roland.

"Mother, this is George," said Prue, on the dock where they were all sitting in their ancestral deck chairs, the daughters in bathing suits with shirts over them, the mother in striped pastels. "It's not his real name, but it's easier to pronounce. He's come up here to see wild animals."

CÉZANNE
MONT SAINTE-VICTOIRE
STEVENSON

George leaned over to kiss the mother's sun-freckled hand, and his dark glasses fell off into the lake. The mother made cooing sounds of distress, Prue laughed at him, Roland ignored him, Pamela turned away in irritation. But Portia—lovely, small-boned Portia, with her velvet eyes—took off her shirt without a word and dove into the lake. She retrieved his dark glasses for him, smiling diffidently, handing them up to him out of the water, her wet hair dripping down over her small breasts like a water nymph's on an Art Nouveau fountain, and he knew then that she was the one he would marry. A woman of courtesy and tact and few words, who would be kind to him, who would cover up for him; who would pick up the things he had dropped.

In the afternoon, Prue took him for a paddle in one of the leaking canvas-covered canoes from the boathouse. He sat in the front, jabbing ineptly at the water with his paddle, thinking about how he would get Portia to marry him. Prue landed them on a rocky point, led him up among the trees. She wanted him to make his usual rakish, violent, outlandish brand of love to her on the reindeer moss and pine needles; she wanted to break some family taboo. Sacrilege was what she had in mind: that was as clear to him as if he'd read it. But George already had his plan of attack worked out, so he put her off. He didn't want to desecrate Wacousta Lodge: he wanted to marry it.

That evening at dinner he neglected all three of the daughters in favor of the mother: the mother was the guardian; the mother was the key. Despite his limping vocabulary he could be devastatingly charming, as Prue had announced to everyone while they ate their chicken-noodle soup.

"Wacousta Lodge," he said to the mother, bending his scar and his glinting, marauder's eyes toward her in the light from the kerosene lamp. "That is so romantic. It is the name of an Indian tribe?"

Prue laughed. "It's named after some stupid book," she said. "Great-grandfather liked it because it was written by a general."

"A major," said Pamela severely. "In the nineteenth century. Major Richardson."

"Ah?" said George, adding this item to his already growing cache of local traditions. So there were books here, and houses named after them! Most people were touchy on the subject of their books; it would be as well to show some interest. Anyway, he *was* interested. But when he asked about the subject of this book it turned out that none of the women had read it.

"I've read it," said Roland, unexpectedly.

"Ah?" said George.

"It's about war."

"It's on the bookshelf in the living room," the mother said indifferently. "After dinner you can have a look, if you're all that fascinated."

It was the mother (Prue explained) who had been guilty of the daughters' alliterative names. She was a whimsical woman, though not sadistic; it was simply an age when parents did that—named their children to match, as if they'd come out of an alphabet book. The bear, the bumblebee, the bunny. Mary and Marjorie Murchison. David and Darlene Daly. Nobody did that anymore. Of course, the mother hadn't stopped at the names themselves but had converted them into nicknames: Pam, Prue, Porsh. Prue's is the only nickname that has stuck. Pamela is now too dignified for hers, and Portia says it's already bad enough, being confused with a car, and why can't she be just an initial?

Roland had been left out of the set, at the insistence of the father. It was Prue's opinion that he had always resented it. "How can you tell?" George asked her, running his tongue around her navel as she lay in her half-slip on the Chinese carpet in his office, smoking a cigarette and surrounded by sheets of paper that had been knocked off the desk during the initial skirmish. She'd made sure the door was unlocked: she liked to run the risk of intrusion, preferably by George's secretary, whom she suspected of being the competition. Which secretary, and when was that? The spilled papers were part of a takeover plan—the Adams group. This is how George keeps track of the various episodes with Prue: by remembering what other skulduggery he was up to at the time. He'd made his money quickly, and then he'd made more. It had been much easier than he'd thought; it had been like spearing fish by lamplight. These people were lax and trusting, and easily embarrassed by a hint of their own intolerance or lack of hospitality to strangers. They weren't ready for him. He'd been as happy as a missionary among the Hawaiians. A hint of opposition and he'd thicken his accent and refer darkly to Communist atrocities. Seize the moral high ground, then grab what you can get.

After that first dinner, they'd all gone into the living room, carrying their cups of coffee. There were kerosene lamps there, too—old ones, with globe shades. Prue took George flagrantly by the hand and led him over to the bookcase, which was topped with a collection of clamshells and pieces of driftwood from the girls' childhoods. "Here it is," she said. "Read it and weep." She went to refill his coffee. George opened the book, an old edition that had, as he'd hoped, a frontispiece of an angry-looking warrior with tomahawk and paint. Then he scanned the shelves. "From Sea to Sea." "Wild Animals I Have Known." "The Collected Poems of Robert W. Service." "Our Empire Story." "Wilderness Tips."

"Wilderness Tips" puzzled him. "Wilderness" he knew, but "tips"? He was not immediately sure whether this word was a verb or a noun. There were asparagus tips, as he knew from menus, and when he was getting into the canoe that afternoon in his slippery leather-soled city shoes Prue had said, "Be careful, it tips." Perhaps it was another sort of tip, as in the "Handy Tips for Happy Homemakers" columns in the women's magazines he had taken to reading in order to improve his English—the vocabularies were fairly simple and there were pictures, which was a big help.

When he opened the book he saw he'd guessed right. "Wilderness Tips" was dated 1905. There was a photo of the author in a plaid wool jacket and a felt hat, smoking a pipe and paddling a canoe, against a backdrop that was more or less what you could see out the window: water, islands, rocks, trees. The book itself told how to do useful things, like snaring small animals and eating them—something George himself had done, though not in forests—or lighting a fire in a rainstorm. These instructions were interspersed with lyrical passages about the joys of independence and the open air, and descriptions of fish-catching and sunsets. George took the book over to a chair near one of the globed lamps; he wanted to read about skinning knives, but Prue came back with his coffee, and Portia offered him a chocolate, and he did not want to run the risk of displeasing either of them, not at this early stage. That could come later.

NOW George again walks into the living room, again carrying a cup of coffee. By this time he's read all of the books in the great-grandfather's collection. He's the only one who has.

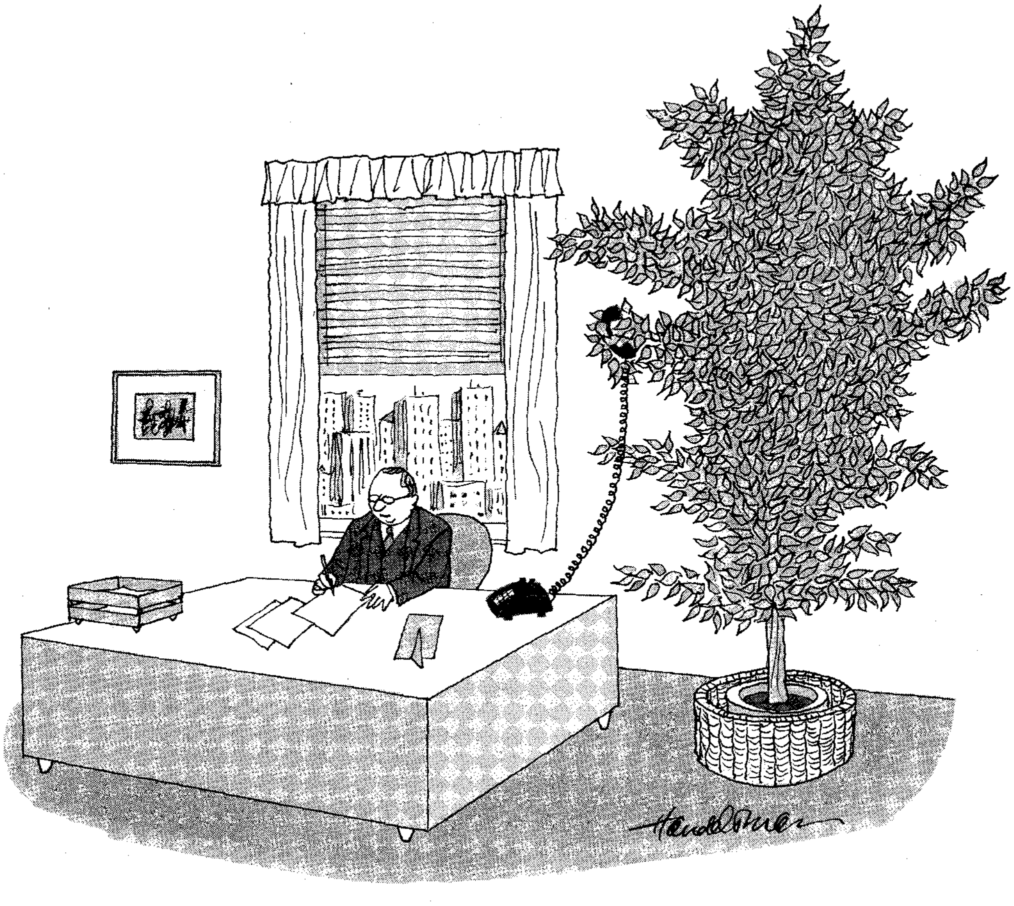
Prue follows him in. The women take it in turns to clear and do the dishes, and it isn't her turn. Roland's job is the wood-splitting. There was an attempt once to press George into service with a dish towel, but he jovially broke three wineglasses, exclaiming over his own clumsiness, and since then he has been left in peace.

"You want more coffee?" Prue says. She stands close to him, proffering the open shirt, the two bandannas. George isn't sure he wants to start anything again, but he sets his coffee down on the top of the bookcase and puts his hand on her hip. He wants to check out his options, make sure he's still welcome. Prue sighs—a long sigh of desire or exasperation, or both.

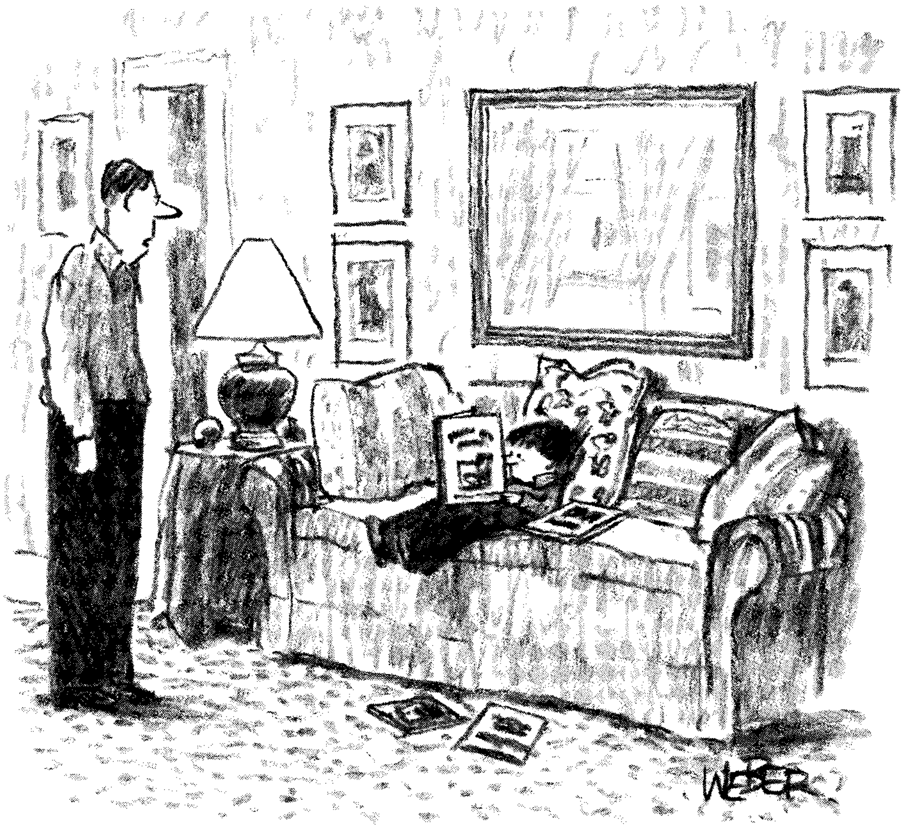
"Oh, George," she says. "What should I do with you?"

"Whatever you like," says George, moving his mouth close to her ear. "I am merely a lump of clay in your hands." Her earlobe holds a tiny silver earring in the form of a shell. He represses an impulse to nibble.

"Curious George," she says, using one of her old nicknames



"Mr. Driscoll can't come to the phone right now. This is Mr. Driscoll's Ficus benjamina."



"Timothy, if you never watch TV you'll never know what's going on in the world."

• •

for him. "You used to have the eyes of a young goat. Lecher eyes."

And now I'm an old goat, thinks George. He can't resist; he wants to be young again; he runs his hand up under her shirt.

"Later," Prue says triumphantly. She steps back from him and aims her wavering smile, and George upsets his cup of coffee with his elbow.

"*Fene egye meg*," he says, and Prue laughs. She knows the meaning of these swearwords, and worse ones, too.

"Clumsy bugger," she says. "I'll get a sponge."

George lights a cigarette and awaits her return. But it is Pamela who appears, frowning, in the doorway, with a deteriorating scrub cloth and a metal bowl. Trust Prue to have found some other urgent thing to do. She is probably in the outhouse, leafing through a magazine and plotting, deciding when and where she will next entice him.

"So, George, you've made a mess," says Pamela, as if he were a puppy. If she had a rolled-up newspaper, thinks George, she'd give me a swat on the nose.

"It's true, I'm an oaf," says George amiably. "But you've always known that."

Pamela gets down on her knees and begins to wipe. "If the plural of 'loaf' is 'loaves,' what's the plural of 'oaf'?" she says. "Why isn't it 'oaves'?" George realizes that a good deal of what she says is directed not to him or to any other listener but simply to herself. Is that because she thinks no one can hear her? He finds the sight of her down on her knees suggestive—stirring, even. He catches a whiff of her: soap flakes, a tinge of something sweet. Hand lotion? She has a graceful neck and throat. He wonders if she's ever had a lover, and, if so, what he was like. An insensitive man, lacking in skill. An oaf.

"George, you smoke like a furnace," she says, without turning around. "You really should stop, or it'll kill you."

George considers the ambiguity of the phrase. "Smoking like a furnace." He sees himself as a dragon, fumes and red flames pouring out of his ravenous maw. Is this really her version of him? "That would make you happy," he says, deciding on impulse to try a frontal attack. "You'd love to see me six feet underground. You've never liked me."

Pamela stops wiping and looks at him over her shoulder. Then she stands up and wrings the dirty cloth out into the bowl. "That's juvenile," she says calmly, "and unworthy of you. You need more exercise. This afternoon I'll take you canoeing."

"You know I'm hopeless at that," says George truthfully. "I always crash into rocks. I never see them."

"Geology is destiny," says Pamela, as if to herself. She scowls at the stuffed loon in its glass bell. She is thinking. "Yes," she says at last. "This lake is full of hidden rocks. It can be dangerous. But I'll take care of you."

Is she flirting with him? Can a crag flirt? George can hardly believe it, but he smiles at her, holding the cigarette in the center of his mouth, showing his canines, and for the first time in their lives Pamela smiles back at him. Her mouth is quite different when the corners turn up; it's as if he were seeing her upside down. He's surprised by the loveliness of her smile. It's not a knowing smile, like Prue's, or saintly, like Portia's. It's the smile of an imp, of a mischievous child, mixed in with something he'd never expected to find in her. A generosity, a carelessness, a largesse. She has something she wishes to give him. What could it be?

AFTER lunch and a pause for digestion, Roland goes back to his chopping, beside the woodshed out behind the kitchen. He's splitting birch—a dying tree he cut down a year ago. The beavers had made a start on it, but changed their minds. White birch don't live long anyway. He'd used the chain saw, slicing the trunk neatly into lengths, the blade going through the wood like a knife through butter, the noise blotting out all other noises—the wind and waves, the whining of the trucks from the highway across the lake. He dislikes machine noises, but they're easier to tolerate when you're making them yourself, when you can control them. Like gunshot.

Not that Roland shoots. He used to: he used to go out for a deer in season, but now it's unsafe, there are too many other men doing it—Italians and who knows what—who'll shoot at anything moving. In any case, he's lost the taste for the end result, the antlered carcasses strapped to the fronts of cars like grotesque hood ornaments, the splendid, murdered heads peering dull-eyed from the tops of minivans. He can see the point of venison, of killing to eat, but to have a cut-off head on your wall? What does it prove, except that a deer can't pull a trigger?

He never talks about these feelings. He knows they would be held against him at his place of work, which he hates. His job is managing money for other people. He knows he is not a success, not by his great-grandfather's standards. The old man sneers at him every morning from that rosewood frame in the washroom, while he is shaving. They both know the same thing: if Roland were a success he'd be out pillaging, not counting the beans. He'd have some gray, inoffensive, discontented man counting the beans for him. A regiment of them. A regiment of men like himself.

He lifts a chunk of birch, stands it on end on the chopping block, swings the axe. A clean split, but he's out of practice. Tomorrow he will have blisters. In a while he'll stop, stoop and pile, stoop and pile. There's already enough wood, but he likes doing this. It's one of the few things he does like. He feels alive only up here.

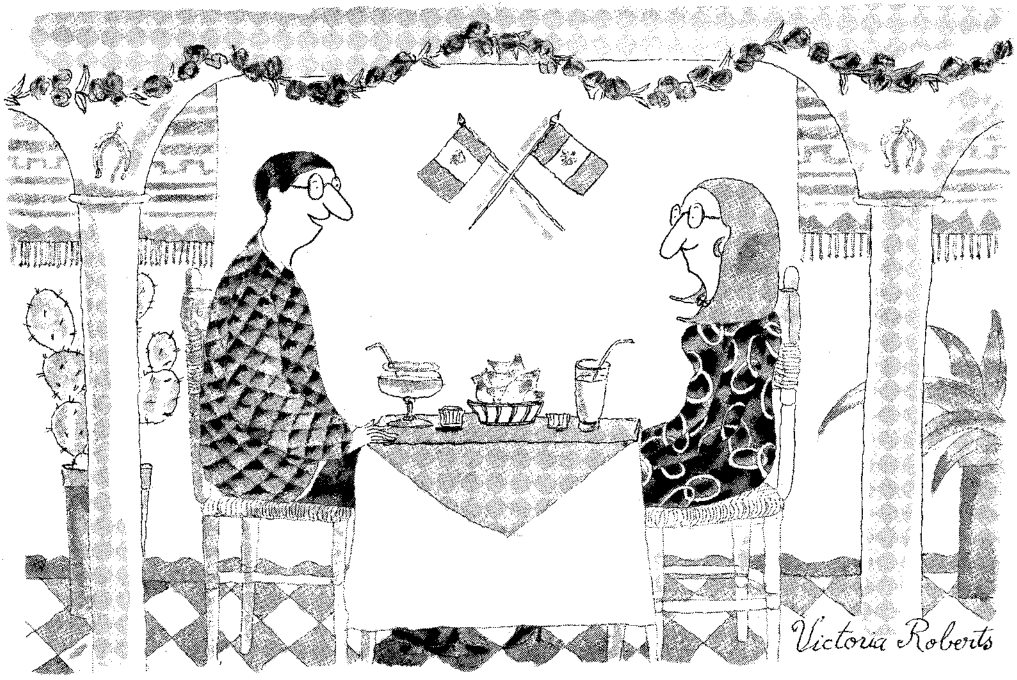
Yesterday, he drove up from the center of the city, past the warehouses and factories and shining glass towers, which have gone up, it seems, overnight; past the subdivisions he could swear weren't there last year, last month. Acres of treelessness, of new town houses with little pointed roofs—like tents, like an invasion. The tents of the Goths and the Vandals. The tents of the Huns and the Magyars. The tents of George.

Down comes his axe on the head of George, which splits in two. If Roland had known George would be here this weekend, he wouldn't have come. Damn Prue and her silly bandannas and her open shirt, her middle-aged breasts offered like hot, freckled muffins along with the sardines and cheese, George sliding his oily eyes all over her, with Portia pretending not to notice. Damn George and his shady deals and his payoffs to town councillors; damn George and his millions, and his spurious, excessive charm. George should stay in the city where he belongs. He's hard to take even there, but at least Roland can keep out of his way. Here at Wacousta Lodge he's intolerable, strutting around as if he owned the place. Not yet. Probably he'll wait for them all to croak, and then turn it into a lucrative retirement home for rich Japanese. He'll sell them Nature, at a huge margin. That's the kind of thing George would do.

Roland knew the man was a lizard the first time he saw him. Why did Portia marry him? She could have married somebody decent, leaving George to Prue, who'd dredged him up from God knows where and was flaunting him around like a prize fish. Prue deserved him; Portia didn't. But why did Prue give him up without a struggle? That wasn't like her. It's as if there had been some negotiation, some invisible deal between them. Portia got George, but what did she trade for him? What did she have to give up?

Portia has always been his favorite sister. She was the youngest, the baby. Prue, who was the next youngest, used to tease her savagely, though Portia was remarkably slow to cry. Instead, she would just look, as if she couldn't quite figure out what Prue was doing to her or why. Then she would go off by herself. Or else Roland would come to her defense and there would be a fight, and Roland would be accused of picking on his sister and be told he shouldn't behave that way because he was a boy. He doesn't remember what part Pamela used to take in all this. Pamela was older than the rest of them and had her own agenda, which did not appear to include anyone else at all. Pamela read at the dinner table and went off by herself in the canoe. Pamela was allowed.

In the city they were in different schools or different grades; the house was large and they had their own pathways through it, their own lairs. It was only here that the territories overlapped. Wacousta Lodge, which looks so peaceful, is for Roland the repository of the family wars.



“Did you know ‘fajitas’ is Spanish for ‘tiny girdles’?”

How old had he been—nine? ten?—the time he almost killed Prue? It was the summer he wanted to be an Indian, because of “Wilderness Tips.” He used to sneak that book off the shelf and take it outside, behind the woodshed, and turn and re-turn the pages. “Wilderness Tips” told you how to survive by yourself in the woods—a thing he longed to do. How to build shelters, make clothing from skins, find edible plants. There were diagrams, too, and pen-and-ink drawings—of animal tracks, of leaves and seeds. Descriptions of different kinds of animal droppings. He remembers the first time he found some bear scat, fresh and reeking, and purple with blueberries. It scared the hell out of him.

There was a lot about the Indians, too; about how noble they were, how brave, faithful, clean, reverent, hospitable, and honorable. (Even these words sound outmoded now, archaic. When was the last time Roland heard anyone praised for being *honorable*?) They attacked only in self-defense, to keep their land from being stolen. They walked differently, too. There was a diagram, on page 208, of footprints, an Indian's and a white man's: the white wore hobnailed boots, and his toes pointed outward; the Indian wore moccasins, and his feet went straight ahead. Roland has been conscious of his feet ever since. He still turns his toes in slightly, to counteract what he feels must be a genetically programmed waddle.

That summer he ran around with a tea towel tucked into the front of his bathing suit for a loincloth and decorated his face with charcoal from the fireplace, alternating with red paint swiped from Prue's paintbox. He lurked outside windows, listening in. Trying to make smoke signals, he set fire to a small patch of undergrowth, down near the boathouse, but put it out before he was caught. He lashed an oblong stone to a stick handle with a leather bootlace borrowed from one of his father's boots; his father was alive then. He snuck up on Prue, who was reading comic books on the dock, dangling her legs in the water.

He had his stone axe. He could have brained her. She was not Prue, of course: she was Custer, she was treachery, she was the enemy. He went as far as raising the axe, watching the convincing silhouette his shadow made on the dock. The stone fell off, onto his bare foot. He shouted with pain. Prue turned around, saw him there, guessed in an instant what he was doing, and laughed herself silly. That was when he'd almost killed her. The other thing, the stone axe, had just been a game.

The whole thing had just been a game, but it wounded him to let go of it. He'd wanted so badly to believe in that kind of Indian, the kind in the book. He'd needed them to exist.

Driving up yesterday, he'd passed a group of actual Indians, three of them, at a blueberry stand. They were wearing jeans and T-shirts and running shoes, the same as everybody else. One of them had a transistor radio. A neat maroon minivan was parked beside the stand. So what did he expect from them, feathers? All that was gone, lost, ruined, years and years before he was born.

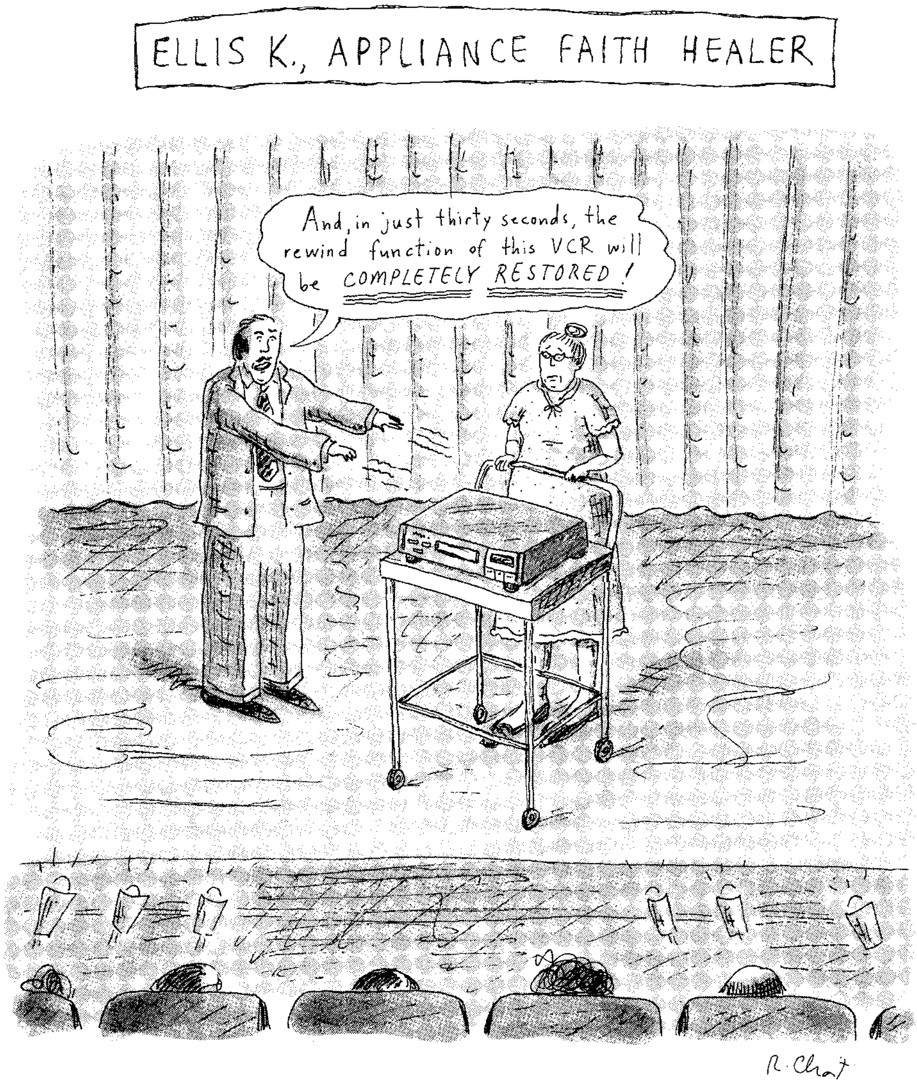
He knows this is nonsense. He's a bean counter, after all; he deals in the hard currency of reality. How can you lose something that was never yours in the first place? (But you can, because "Wilderness Tips" was his once, and he's lost it. He opened the book today, before lunch, after forty years. There was the innocent, fusty vocabulary that had once inspired him: Manhood with a capital "M," courage, honor. The Spirit of the Wild. It was naïve, pompous, ridiculous. It was dust.)

Roland chops with his axe. The sound goes out through the trees, across the small inlet to the left of him, bounces off a high ridge of rock, making a faint echo. It's an old sound, a sound left over.

PORTIA lies on her bed, listening to the sound of Roland chopping wood, having her nap. She has her nap the way she always has, without sleeping. The nap was enforced on her once, by her mother. Now she just does it. When she was little she used to lie here—tucked safely away from Prue—in her parents' room, in her parents' double bed, which is now hers and George's. She would think about all kinds of things; she would see faces and animal shapes in the knots of the pine ceiling and make up stories about them.

Now the only stories she ever makes up are about George. They are probably even more unrealistic than the stories he makes up about himself, but she has no way of really knowing. There are those who lie by instinct and those who don't, and the ones who don't are at the mercy of the ones who do.

Prue, for instance, is a blithe liar. She always has been; she enjoys it. When they were children she'd say, "Look, there's a big snot coming out of your nose," and Portia would run to the washroom mirror. Nothing was there, but Prue's saying it made it some-


ELLIS K., APPLIANCE FAITH HEALER
And, in just thirty seconds, the rewind function of this VCR will be COMPLETELY RESTORED!
R. Chast

INSIDE THE MIDGET

In town again some ten years later,
led by new companions to
a flashy restaurant—Chinese—
I know it like I know my face.
Whatever it was . . . why can't I think?
Sitting before a blank

placemat, as at an exam—or worse,
the dreams of exams one had back then,
of never having taken the course—
I hear my ears pound when a friend
whispers the impossible answer:
"This used to be the Midget Deli."

The Midget! It was half this size.
I thought everything was supposed to shrink
when one came back. They must have torn
down the wall between the rooms, then
refurnished, refinished, refined until
there's nothing left we'd recognize—

Darling, you should be here. How many
Sunday mornings did we stumble in,
hung over, egging the other on
to order feasts we'd barely touch?
("Some toast, at least. Soaks up the wine.")
Where's our exhausted, pickle-faced waitress

who'd extract a pad and pencil from
the marsupial pouch in her uniform?
Thick-rimmed as a bathtub, white
but ringed with a tannin stain, the mug
of tea she'd bring had the bag already
soaking in lukewarm, shallow water,

limp tag like a dangling arm.
One can grow nostalgic over anything,
it seems. Tonight, the tea pours hot
from a metal pot into porcelain.
Much better—which is hard to admit
to that happy pessimist, still dressed

in jeans and college black, whose heart
(she tells me) beats beneath my pearls.
Ten years ago? No—twelve, thirteen.
And think of it: grownup even then,
as, over some table here (no X
to mark the spot), your eyes would meet

mine in one thrilling thought—*Last night*—
and nothing need be said.
Look: I'm shaking. I can hardly find
the ladies' room without a guide,
and then the lady in the mirror
isn't the one I was seeking out—

she looks more like my mother. I know
that tender, disappointed frown;
she gave it to some midget
version of myself (two front teeth
missing) who'd just ripped a skirt.
But *now* what have I done

to feel so guilty for? Was I
the one who chose to gut the place?
Or to gild the walls, as if space fills
equally well with true or false?
The door swings open: in the dining room
I can see at once the counter where,

above a pastry case of strudel,
a plastic dome like a crystal ball
housed yesterday's last bagel.
They're opening fortune cookies there,
chuckling at strips of paper far
too small, from here, to read.

—MARY JO SALTER

• •

how true, and Portia would scrub and scrub, trying to wash away invisible dirt, while Prue doubled over with laughter. "Don't believe her," Pamela would say. "Don't be such a sucker." (One of her chief words then—she used it for lollipops, for fish, for mouths.) But sometimes the things Prue said were true, so how could you ever know?

George is the same way. He gazes into her eyes and lies with such tenderness, such heartfelt feeling, such implied sadness at her want of faith in him, that she can't question him. To question him would turn her cynical and hard. She would rather be kissed; she would rather be cherished. She would rather believe.

She knew about George and Prue at the beginning, of course. It was Prue who brought him up here first. But after a while George swore to her that the thing with Prue hadn't been serious, and, anyway, it was over; and Prue herself seemed not to care. She'd already had George, she implied; he was used, like a dress. If Portia wanted him next it was nothing to her. "Help yourself," she said. "God knows there's enough of George to go around."

Portia wanted to do things the way Prue did; she wanted to get her hands dirty. Something intense, followed by careless dismissal. But she was too young; she didn't have the knack. She'd come up out of the lake and handed George's dark glasses to him, and he'd looked at her in the wrong way: with reverence, not with passion—a clear gaze with no smut in it. After dinner that evening he'd said, with meticulous politeness, "Everything here is so new to me. I like you to be my guide, to your wonderful country."

"Me?" Portia said. "I don't know. What about Prue?" She was already feeling guilty.

"Prue does not understand obligations," he said (which was true enough, she didn't, and this insight of

George's was impressive). "You understand them, however. I am the guest: you are the host."

"Hostess," said Pamela, who had not seemed to be listening. "A 'host' is male, like 'mine host' in an inn, or else it's the wafer you eat at Communion. Or the caterpillar that all the parasites lay their eggs on."

"You have a very intellectual sister, I think," said George, smiling, as if this quality in Pamela were a curiosity, or perhaps a deformity. Pamela shot him a look of pure resentment, and ever since that time she has not made any effort with him. He might as well be a bump on a log as far as she's concerned.

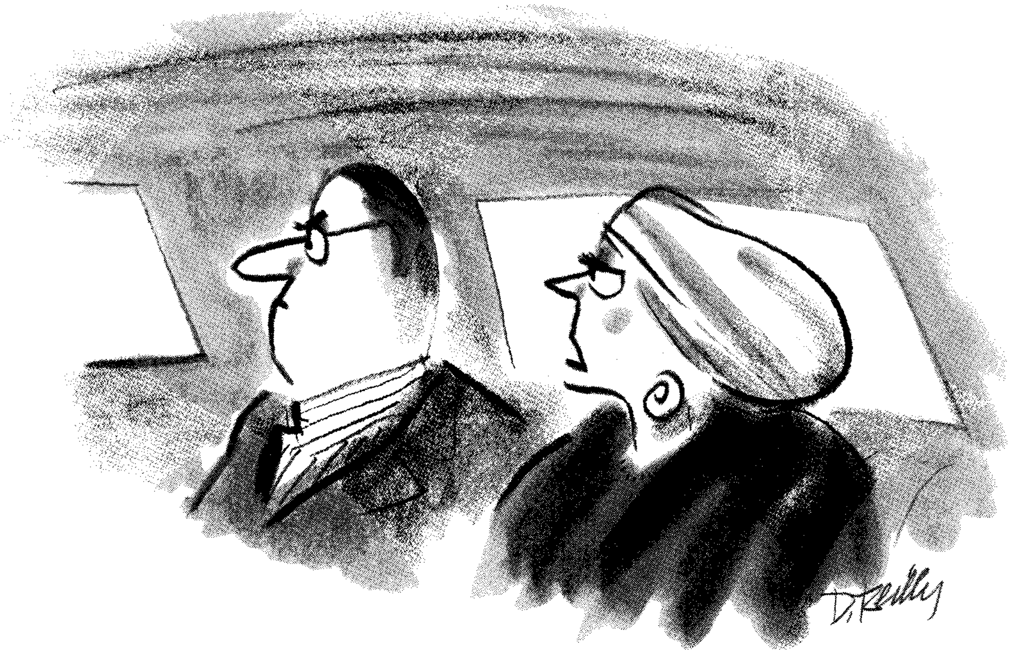
But Portia doesn't mind Pamela's indifference; rather, she cherishes it. Once she wanted to be more like Prue, but now it's Pamela. Pamela, considered so eccentric and odd and plain in the fifties, now seems to be the only one of them who got it right. Freedom isn't having a lot of men, not if you think you have to. Pamela does what she wants, nothing more and nothing less.

It's a good thing there's one woman in the universe who can take George or leave him alone. Portia wishes she herself could be so cool. Even after thirty-two years, she's still caught in the breathlessness, the airlessness of love. It's no different from the first night, when he'd bent to kiss her (down by the boathouse, after an evening paddle) and she'd stood there like a deer in the glare of headlights, paralyzed, while something huge and unstoppable bore down on her, waiting for the scream of brakes, the shock of collision. But it wasn't that kind of kiss: it wasn't sex George wanted out of her. He'd wanted the other thing—the wifely white cotton blouses, the bassinets. He's sad they never had children.

He was such a beautiful man then. There were a lot of beautiful men, but the others seemed blank, unwritten on, compared with him. He's the only one she's ever wanted. She can't have him, though, because nobody can. George has himself, and he won't let go.

This is what drives Prue on: she wants to get hold of him finally, open him up, wring some sort of concession out of him. He's the only person in her life she's never been able to bully or ignore or deceive or reduce. Portia can always tell when Prue's back on the attack: there are telltale signs; there are phone calls with no voice attached; there are flights of sincere, melancholy lying from George—a dead giveaway. He knows she knows; he treasures her for saying nothing; she allows herself to be treasured.

There's nothing going on now, though. Not at the moment, not up here, not at Wacousta Lodge. Prue wouldn't dare, and neither would George. He knows where she draws the line; he knows the price of her silence.



"You drive yourself too hard. You really must learn to take time to stop and smell the profits."

• •

PORTIA looks at her watch: her nap is over. As usual, it has not been restful. She gets up, goes into the washroom, splashes her face. She applies cream lightly, massaging it in around her fallen eyes. The question at this age is what kind of dog you will shortly resemble. She will be a beagle, Prue a terrier. Pamela will be an Afghan, or something equally unearthly.

Her great-grandfather watches her in the mirror, disapproving of her as he always has, although he was dead long before she was born. "I did the best I could," she tells him. "I married a man like you. A robber king." She will never admit to him or to anyone else that this might possibly have been a mistake. (Why does her father never figure in her inner life? Because he wasn't there, not even as a picture. He was at the office. Even in the summers —especially in the summers—he was an absence.)

Outside the window, Roland has stopped chopping and is sitting on the chopping block, his arms on his knees, his big hands dangling, staring off into the trees. He is her favorite; he was the one who always came to her defense. That stopped when she married George. Faced with Prue, Roland had been effective, but George baffled him. No wonder. It's Portia's love that protects George, walls him around. Portia's stupid love.

Where is George? Portia wanders the house, looking for him. Usually at this time of day he'd be in the living room, extended on the couch, dozing; but he isn't there. She looks around the empty room. Everything is as usual; the snowshoes on the wall, the birchbark canoe she always longed to, play with but couldn't because it was a souvenir, the rug made out of a bearskin, dull-haired and shedding. That bear was a friend once, it even had a name, but she's forgotten it. On the bookcase there's an empty coffee cup. That's a slip, an oversight; it shouldn't be there. She has the first stirrings of the feeling she gets when she knows George is with Prue, a numbness that begins at the base of the spine. But no, Prue is in the hammock on the screened veranda, reading a magazine. There can't be two of her.

"Where's George?" Portia asks, knowing she shouldn't.

"How the hell should I know?" says Prue. Her tone is peevish, as if she's wondering the same thing. "What's the matter—he slipped his leash? Funny, there's no bimbo secretaries up here." In the sunlight she has a disorderly look: her too orange lipstick is threading into the tiny wrinkles around her mouth; her bangs are brazen; things are going askew.

"There's no need to be nasty," says Portia. This is what their mother used to say to Prue, over the body of some dismembered doll, some razed sandbox village, a bottle of purloined nail polish hurled against the wall; and Prue never had an answer then. But now their mother isn't here to say it.

"There *is*," says Prue with vehemence. "There is a need."

Ordinarily, Portia would just walk away, pretending she hadn't heard. Now she says, "Why?"

"Because you always had the best of everything," says Prue.

Portia is astounded. Surely she is the mute one, the shadow; hasn't she always played wallflower to Prue's frantic dancer? "What?" she says. "What did I always have?"

"You've always been too good for words," says Prue with rancor. "Why do you stay with him, anyway? Is it the money?"

"He didn't have a bean when I married him," says Portia mildly. She's wondering whether or not she hates Prue. She isn't sure what real hatred would feel like. Anyway, Prue is losing that taut, mischievous body she's done such damage with, and, now that's going, what will she have left? In the way of weapons, that is.

"When *he* married *you*, you mean," says Prue. "When Mother married you off. You just stood there and let the two of them do it, like the little suck you were."

Portia wonders if this is true. She wishes she could go back a few decades, grow up again. The first time, she missed something: she missed a stage, or some vital information other people seemed to have. This time she would make different choices. She would be less obedient; she would not ask for permission. She would not say "I do" but "I am."

"Why didn't you ever fight back?" says Prue. She sounds genuinely aggrieved.

Portia can see down the path to the lake, to the dock. There's a canvas deck chair down there with nobody in it. George's newspaper, tucked underneath, is fluttering: there's a wind coming up. George must have forgotten to put his chair away. It's unlike him.

"Just a minute," she says to Prue, as if they're going to take a short break in this conversation they've been having in different ways for fifty years now. She goes out the screen door and down the path. Where has George got to? Probably the outhouse. But his canvas chair is rippling like a sail.

She stoops to fold up the chair, and hears. There's someone in the boathouse; there's a scuffling, a breathing. A porcupine, eating salt off the oar handles? Not in broad daylight. No, there's a voice. The water glitters, the small waves slap against the dock. It can't be Prue; Prue is up on the veranda. It sounds like her mother, like her mother opening birthday presents—that soft crescendo of surprise and almost pained wonder. Oh. Oh. *Oh.* Of course, you can't tell much from just a voice: you can't tell what age a person is, in the dark.

Portia folds the chair, props it gently against the wall of the boathouse. She goes up the path, carrying the paper. No sense in having it blow all over the lake. No sense in having the clear waves dirtied with stale news, with soggy human grief. Desire and greed and terrible disappointments, even in the financial pages. Though you had to read between the lines.

She doesn't want to go into the house. She skirts around behind the kitchen, avoiding the woodshed where she can hear the chock, chock of Roland piling wood, goes back along the path that leads to the small, sandy bay where they all swam as children, before they were old enough to dive in off the dock. She lies down on the ground there and goes to sleep. When she wakes up there are pine needles sticking to her cheek and she has a headache. The sun is low in the sky; the wind has fallen; there are no more waves. A dead flat calm. She takes off her clothes, not bothering even to listen for motorboats. They go so fast anyway she'd just be a blur.

She wades into the lake, slipping into the water as if between the layers of a mirror: the glass layer, the silver layer. She meets the doubles of her own legs, her own arms, going down. She floats with only her head above water. She is herself at fifteen, herself at twelve, herself at nine, at six. On the shore, attached to their familiar reflections, are the same rock, the same white stump that have always been there. The cold hush of the lake is like a long breathing out of relief. It's safe to be this age, to know that the stump is her stump, the rock is hers, that nothing will ever change.

There's a bell, ringing faintly from the distant house. The dinner bell. It's Pamela's turn to cook. What will they have? A strange concoction. Pamela has her own ideas about food.

The bell rings again, and Portia knows that something bad is about to happen. She could avoid it; she could swim out further, let go, and sink.

She looks at the shore, at the waterline, where the lake ends. It's no longer horizontal: it seems to be on a slant, as if there had been a slippage in the bedrock; as if the trees, the granite outcrops, Wacousta Lodge, the peninsula, the whole mainland were sliding gradually down, submerging. She thinks of a boat—a huge boat, a passenger liner—tilting, descending, with the lights still on, the music still playing, the people talking on and on, still not aware of the disaster that has already overcome them. She sees herself running naked through the ballroom—an absurd, disturbing figure with dripping hair and flailing arms, screaming at them, "Don't you see? It's coming apart, everything's coming apart, you're sinking. You're finished, you're over, you're dead!"

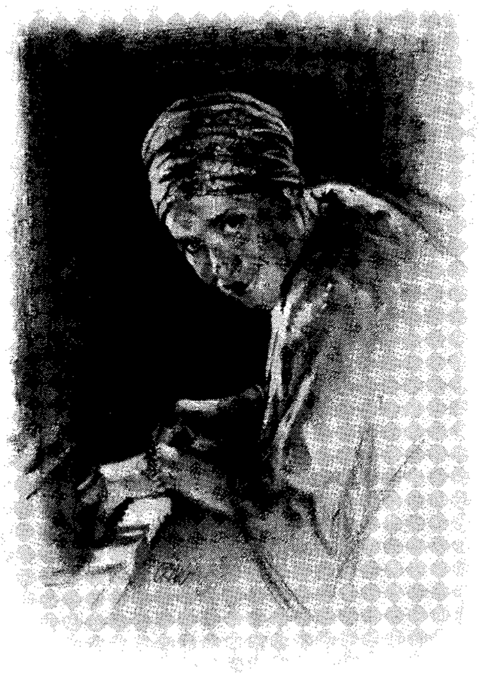
She would be invisible, of course. No one would hear her. And nothing has happened, really, that hasn't happened before.

—MARGARET ATWOOD

❋ PROFILES ❋

WONDER WOMAN

AT the age of sixty-eight, Dorothy Donegan is on the verge. She is a virtuoso pianist, an electric performer, and a transcendent clown, and she has been doing what she does for fifty years without—until the past year or so—much effect. (We take a long time in this country to dig our originals; as often as not, we let them fall by the way.) She is almost the last of the vaudeville-tinged pianists who came up in the late thirties and early forties, and included Maurice Rocco, Loumel Morgan, Harry the Hipster Gibson, Rose Murphy, and Nellie Lutcher. (There were funny bands then, too, among them the Spirits of Rhythm, Slim and Slam, and Louis Jordan and His Tympani Five.) Rocco and Morgan stood and danced while they played; Gibson wore white gloves and sang mocking songs about marijuana; Murphy chirruped and clicked in a Betty Boop voice; and Lutcher sang and hummed in falsetto, her arms moving like snakes.

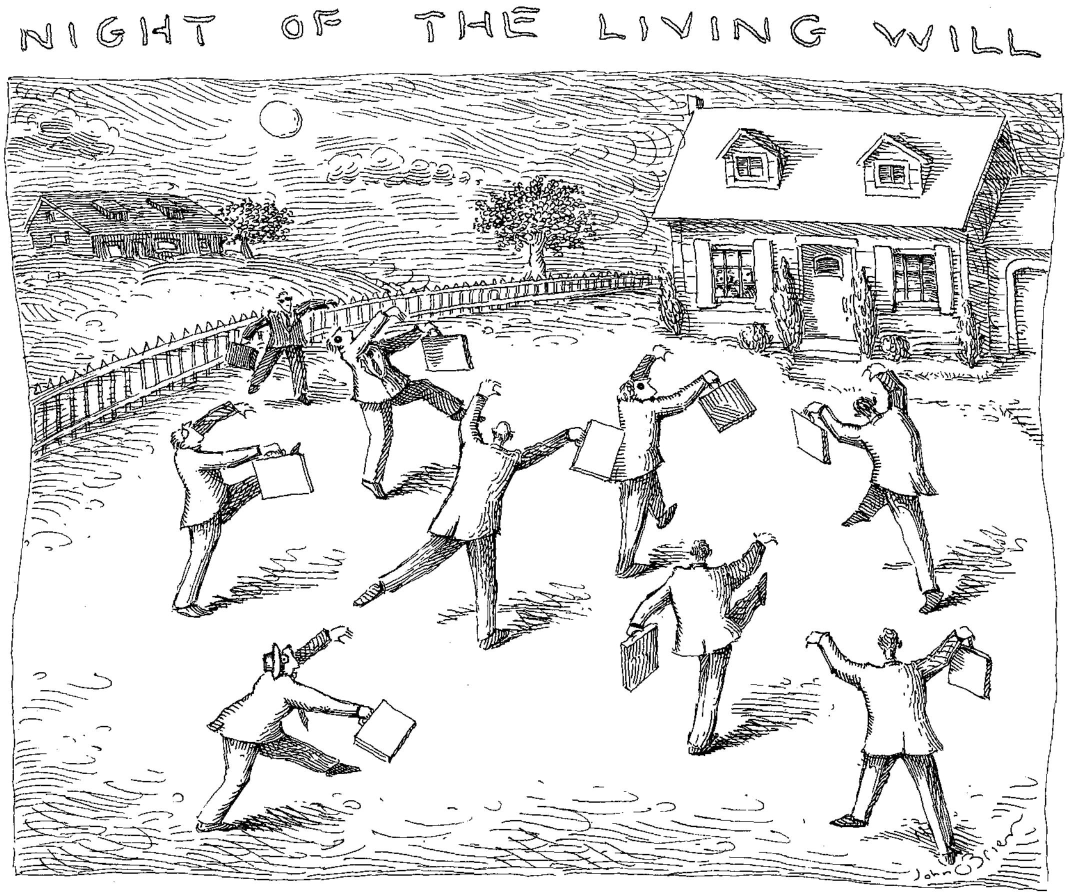


Dorothy Donegan is a better musician than any of them, and she is more subtle. A panoply of expressions, ranging from evil to benign, crosses her face, and she moves like a Balinese dancer. She has thickened in the beam over the years, but she still has an hourglass figure (she says she once resembled a Coca-Cola bottle), and she doesn't have any bones—she sways as seamlessly as wheat in the wind. Sometimes she lifts her arms from the keyboard and shapes her hands into little cages so that arms and hands become cherry pickers. She often wears high heels on the stand, and when she gets going she pounds them on the floor like jackhammers. The rest of her clothes tend to be equally flamboyant. During a recent two-week engagement at the Fortune Garden Pavilion, on East 49th Street, she wore a black scoop-necked camisole decorated with sequins; a long black sequinned jacket rimmed with black and white checks; black-and-white checked sequinned pants; a black silk turban; a long red-and-black scarf; a heavy gold choker; and a black silk garter, fastened low on her left leg. Sometimes she will get up from the keyboard near the end of a number and dance into the audience on her high heels, her knees bent, her head ducking up and down, her fingers snapping. She will return to the piano and, still standing, finish with booming chords.

She has a strong, pleased, amused face. Her nose is shapeless, and she has a restless upper lip and wide-spaced eyes. While she plays, she will shut her eyes and screw her mouth into a fearful whorl. Or she will open her mouth slightly and look into the middle distance, her eyes half shut, while playing a fast walking bass in her left hand. She will pop her eyes and push out her lower lip, as if she were going to smack someone, or she will wrinkle her nose prettily and lower her head, as if she were accepting compliments. She will make an O-mouth, squinch her eyes, and play drenching tremolos. She will start humming loudly and look satanic—her eyes hard and staring, her eyebrows lifted. But when there are heavy people in the audience she will drop most of this gallimaufry and, demure and girlish, just play, her head tipped forward and her eyes following her racing hands.

She's as loose as a goose off the stand. One morning not long ago, in the middle of her run at the Fortune Garden, she talked about herself. She was sitting on the end of her bed in a midtown hotel room, and she had just finished a late, second breakfast of juice, corned-beef hash, and coffee. (She has diabetes, and eats several small meals a day.) She was dressed in navy-blue sweatpants with double white piping down the outside of the legs, a navy sweatshirt with stripes on the sleeves, slippers, and a knitted navy-and-white hat, worn low. She talks in a Southern drawl punctuated with sudden, hurry-up word jams and with statements that turn into questions and end half an octave higher than where they started. She has a wonderful laugh. It descends in long, easy stages, like the levels of a Malaysian rice paddy. She shouts when she answers the telephone, the first syllable of her "hello" a C and the second a D. She spaces her talk with Southern country colloquialisms.

"I live in a big old house in West Los Angeles," she said. "I've got a reverend who stays with me and pays rent. I practice about four hours a day when I'm home, which isn't as often since my name's been getting before the public. I'm now a Steinway artist, and I'd like a nine-foot Steinway grand, but they cost sixty big ones. I was born and grew up in Chicago, and what I like the most about California is the weather. The weather in Chicago and here can be meaner than a Mississippi sheriff. I was born in Cook County Hospital on April 6, 1922, and so I'm an Aries woman, which means I'm hardheaded and stubborn. If somebody tells me 'You ain't goin',' I'm gone. My mother was a sometime domestic, and my father was a chef-cook with the C. B. & Q.—the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. He loved to play the trumpet, but he was a better cook. He cooked that rice and gravy and fried chicken, and when he did a turkey he used milk and butter and wrapped it in cheesecloth and cooked it into submission. He worked forty years on the railroad, and he died in 1958, a stroke. He was tall and brown-skinned and handsome, but

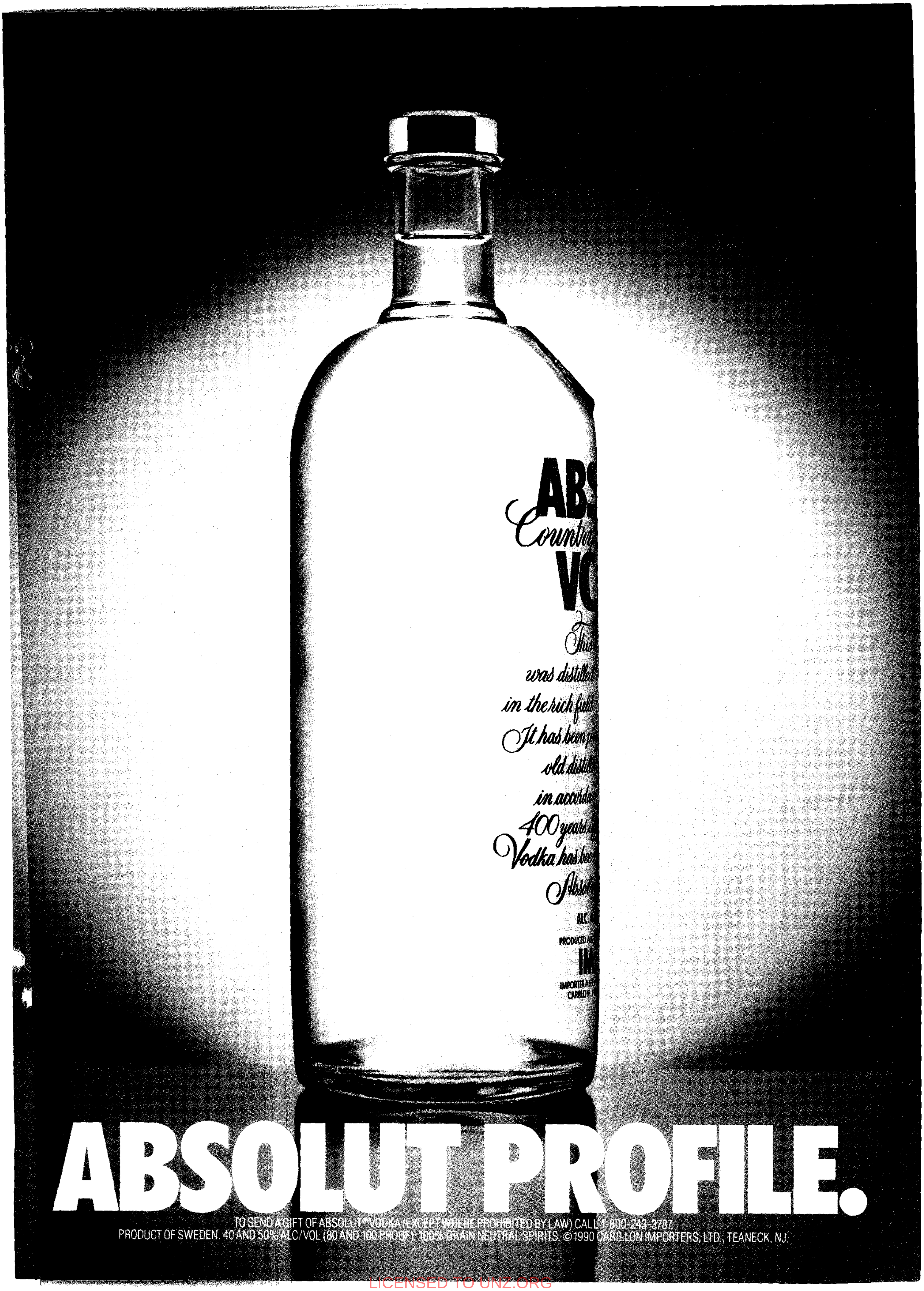

NIGHT OF THE LIVING WILL
John O'Brien

his head was smaller than his body. I think he had Indian blood. He loved cards—bridge and whist—and he'd cuss in a loud voice if he lost. He had come up to Chicago from Huntsville, Alabama, around 1916. That was where Tallulah Bankhead was from, Speaker Bankhead's daughter? His name was Donazell—Donazell Donegan. That's a curious name, but nobody's perfect. My mother was born Ella Day, in Newton, Mississippi, where she taught school. She was tall and pretty and gregarious, and she looked a little like Josephine Baker. Her first husband divorced her for a more experienced woman. She always married railroad men, because they were away from home so much—five days away, five days home. She liked a lot of privacy. We had a great big flat, and she rented out rooms to supplement her income, at forty dollars a month. She told me never to marry a man until he proved he could bring home the money—I wish I'd listened. But she said first you have to love yourself. She married another railroad man after my father died, and she passed in 1972. I had a younger brother, Leon, who was an engineer in the Chicago school system. He died three years ago, mostly of drink.

"My mother had two boarders, sisters named Felicia and Eula Mae, and they told her she should buy a piano, and she did, for fifty dollars. I started taking lessons from Alfred N. Simms when I was eight. He was from the West Indies, and I studied with him about five years. He taught Cleo Brown, who had the most powerful left hand I ever heard when I was growing up. Then I went downtown and studied with Rudolph Ganz, the head of the Chicago Musical College. He taught me Gershwin's 'Preludes.' At DuSable High School, I came under the thumb of Captain Walter Dyett. His ear was so sensitive he could hear a mosquito pee on a bale of cotton. I was already recognized as a child prodigy. In 1943, I gave a concert at Orchestra Hall. In the first half, I played Rachmaninoff and Grieg, and in the second I drug it through the swamp—played jazz. Claudia Cassidy reviewed the concert on the first page of the Chicago *Tribune*. She said I had a terrific technique and I looked like a Toulouse-Lautrec lithograph. I had dyed my hair red for the concert, and I was wearing a white satin gown."

The telephone rang, and Dorothy Donegan let loose a "hello." She talked less than a minute, and fell silent, listening. She moved her head slowly up and down, and rolled her eyes twice. "That was my agent," she said after she hung up. "He likes talkin' better'n listenin'. Around that time in Chicago, the pianist Roselle Gayle brought Art Tatum to my house. Tatum wanted to meet this red-headed girl he'd heard about. He listened to me play, and he took me under his wing. He'd sit at the keyboard, a whiskey at one end and a beer chaser at the other, and show me different things. One was a run on just the black keys with his thumb tucked underneath. But he was a little sly. Sometimes he'd show me two ways to do the same thing to confuse me. He would always tell me to stay light, to use that *leggiero* touch. He'd say about something difficult, 'If it don't fit, don't force it.' He told me I was his favorite woman pianist. 'You never know about that girl,' he'd say. 'You never know what she's going to do. She surprises you.' He was supposed to be blind, but when he played cards he'd hold each card up to his right eye like this. I know he could see women. He kept his money in different pockets—the ones here, the fives here, the tens here. But he didn't spend *any* money. He was as tight as the instep of a chicken. I worshipped Tatum, and, of course, I worshipped Vladimir Horowitz. Tatum was the Horowitz of jazz, and Horowitz was the Tatum of classical music.

"By this time, I was working around the clubs in Chicago—first at Costello's Grill, on North Dearborn. My mother would pick me and my paycheck up, which was a great big thirty-five dollars. Then I was at Elmer's Cocktail Lounge, and after that, for two hundred a week, which was big money, at the Garrick Stage Bar. Red Allen had the band and Alberta Hunter sang. She wore diamond rings, and she'd tell



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me, 'Life is beautiful if you save your money.' My first manager was Joe Sherman. He was one of Joe Glaser's boys, and he was a pugilist. He'd tell me to lead with my left, and he'd hit me across the back and push me up on the stage. I was at the Garrick eight months. Then I went across the street to the Latin Quarter. There were chorus girls, and dancers like the DeMarcos, and comedians like Jerry Lester and Benny Fields and Lou Holtz. Fifty years later, I still remember one of Holtz's jokes. It was about this man who bought a bird for his wife for a thousand dollars. It was a fantastic bird, and it spoke fifteen languages. One day, when the husband came home from work, he looked around and couldn't find the bird anywhere. He asked his wife, 'Where's the boidie?,' and the wife said, 'In the oven.' The husband couldn't believe his ears. 'That boid cost a thousand dollars, and you put him in the oven!' The wife said, 'If he was so smart, and spoke fifteen languages, why didn't he say something?'

"In 1944, I had an offer to go to Hollywood and appear in a revue called 'Sensations of 1945.' Eleanor Powell was in it, and Sophie Tucker and W. C. Fields and Cab Calloway and Woody Herman. I played in a duo with the pianist Gene Rodgers. They offered me a contract for seven years at seven hundred and fifty a week, but the manager I had then turned them down, and all I got was three thousand a week for the two weeks I worked. The manager's name was Burt Gerbis, and he was known as Corkscrew Gerbis, because he was so crooked. My first job in New York was at the Zanzibar, and later, in the fifties, I worked off and on at the Embers. Jo Jones was kind of the house drummer there, and he would call me one of his 'kiddies,' because he was ten years older and used to give me advice and such. One night, when I started a classical piece he got mad and said, 'Play some music,' and threw a drumstick at me. I picked it up and threw it back and hit him in the head. People thought it was part of the act. At that time, there was still a wartime entertainment tax in night clubs. It was twenty per cent, and they put it on if there was any singing or dancing—any entertainment other than straight music. I was doing a lot of wiggling then, moving my derrière around and snapping my fingers and carrying on, and the I.R.S. decided I was entertainment and put the tax on. That hurt business, so I went to the musicians' union, and the union asked, can she wiggle as long as she's playing? And they said yes, and took the tax off. A wiggle never hurt anybody.

"I married my first husband, John McClain, in 1948, and he's still alive. We had a son, who's been managing Janet Jackson. McClain and I had a club for a year in the early fifties in Los Angeles, but he paid me with a mink coat, instead of a regular salary, so I quit. I was temperamental about things like that, and about color. I didn't like working where there were two pay scales, one for whites and one for blacks, but I didn't have a choice. I married two more men after that, and I think I've been married three times too many. Every time there were dry periods in the sixties and seventies and I couldn't find gigs, I'd marry again. Then, when I got work, I'd drift away. I didn't work that much in the sixties—nobody did after rock came in. But I was at Jimmy Weston's a lot in the seventies. A lot of the people you saw in there were hoods and cops. And I played Michael's Pub and George Wein's festivals."

DOROTHY DONEGAN loves interpolation, and she may flavor "The Man I Love," say, with bits and pieces of Chopin, Fats Waller, Rachmaninoff, and Nathaniel Dett. (At one of several tumultuous concerts she gave last fall on a jazz cruise on the S. S. Norway, she mixed "Jitterbug Waltz," "Rhapsody in Blue," "Caravan," "The Flight of the Bumblebee," "Bye Bye Blackbird," and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" into a dozen or so standards she played.) On fast numbers she swings as hard as any pianist who ever lived, and on slow ballads she is as delicate as a rose. Her technique rivals Art Tatum's. She is completely ambidextrous, her runs plummet like mercury, and she can play so fast that the individual beats merge into a kind of rhythmic glissando. She can produce thunder in her low registers and, seconds later, that *leggiero* touch in her high registers. Here is how she describes what she might do with "Tea for Two": "I play the verse first, doing it like Tatum, chromatically. Then I mix in a melody from 'Nola' in the right hand, and keep 'Tea for Two' going in the left. Suddenly, I accelerate into overdrive, which is what I call

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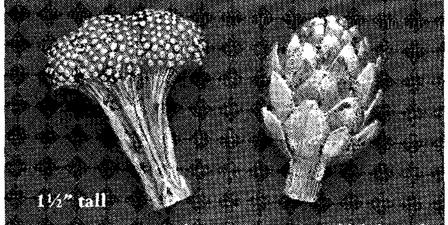

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double time. I modulate, and pass into a difficult passage where I go from a D major to E major to C-sharp to D seventh to B major and to the diminished. I do a cycle of fours, and it comes out chromatically. I put in some fireworks, maybe a fast boogie bass, and relax with the 'Second Hungarian Rhapsody,' playing it in octaves. I throw the melody back and forth between my hands, showing a little Horowitz. Here is where I put in some 'Juba Dance,' by Dett. Near the end of the piece, I do a Chopin polonaise. I close with some beautiful church chords, and play the 'Tea for Two' melody again. After the clapping, I repeat the melody, ending on some high Pope Gregory chords. I first worked this 'Tea for Two' out in 1955, but it changes all the time, and I don't play it too often, because it might get stale on me. Sometimes you make a mistake when you're improvising, and when you try to correct it you might come up with a new idea, and you develop that. Every night is a developing process. You shake in a little of this and a little of that, like making spaghetti sauce. There are only twelve notes on the piano, so nothing is original, nothing is new. I just dive in. If it comes out right, good. If it doesn't, try again."

Dorothy Donegan's drummer, Ray Mosca, has worked with her off and on for thirty years. She continues to astonish him. "I've played with Earl Hines and Teddy Wilson and Mary Lou Williams and Oscar Peterson and Hazel Scott, but Dorothy has the most power of all of them," Mosca said recently. "She has the power of an orchestra. She changes all the time. She may play the same tunes, but they are always different. And every set is different from the last one. She may change things around every eight bars, so you can't take your eyes off her. She's smart like a fox, and in that way she reminds me of Dizzy Gillespie. She goes in and out of focus. She'll come on like she doesn't know what's happening at all, when she does, or she'll pretend she's up on what you're talking about when she doesn't know a thing. She'll come on jiving and kidding, then knock you out with some knowledge. She's not on the same emotional level all the time. She's very high or very low, but when she's got the highs she's full of fire. She has a tremendous memory for people and places. She can run into someone over in Europe she hasn't seen for ten or fifteen years and remember their name, the names of their children, and the name of their dog. Dorothy's been stuck in jazz rooms all her life, and that's been her problem. She comes from a classical background, and she still plays a lot of classical stuff. I heard her play a fifteen-minute piece in Europe, and she tore the place up. She should start concertizing, like she did on the Norway. She gets very tired playing three sets a night in a jazz room."

The Jelly Roll Morton disciple Bob Greene followed Dorothy Donegan at a concert of jazz pianists on the Norway. "I was in the unenviable position of coming after Dorothy," he said recently. "She played a sedate 'I Can't Get Started,' lulling everyone. Then she tore into a 'Tea for Two' that made everybody stand up and shout. All I could do was play Morton's 'Mamie's Blues' and 'Tiger Rag' and get off as fast as possible. But it worked out, because she learned something from me and I learned something from her. After the concert, she told me, 'I'm going to steal that "Tiger," ' and she did. She played it two nights later, and she got it perfectly, all three parts, and she turned it inside out. And I learned from watching her a new way to play left-hand octaves. Instead of using her wrist, she raises her arm so that it looks like a swan's neck—the wrist arched, the little finger stiff—and lets it fall back to the keys in one graceful swoop.

"She free-associates when she plays, and it must take great control for her to keep everything from running away. I think she's better than Art Tatum. Tatum's runs and arpeggios often struck me as decoration, as gingerbread, even as filler. Her flash is integrated into the music itself."

BITS of wisdom, philosophy, surrealism, and comedy rise continually in Dorothy Donegan's conversation. These stay in the mind:

"I think Adam Clayton Powell tried to pass as colored."

"If you learn one concerto, you can live off it a year."

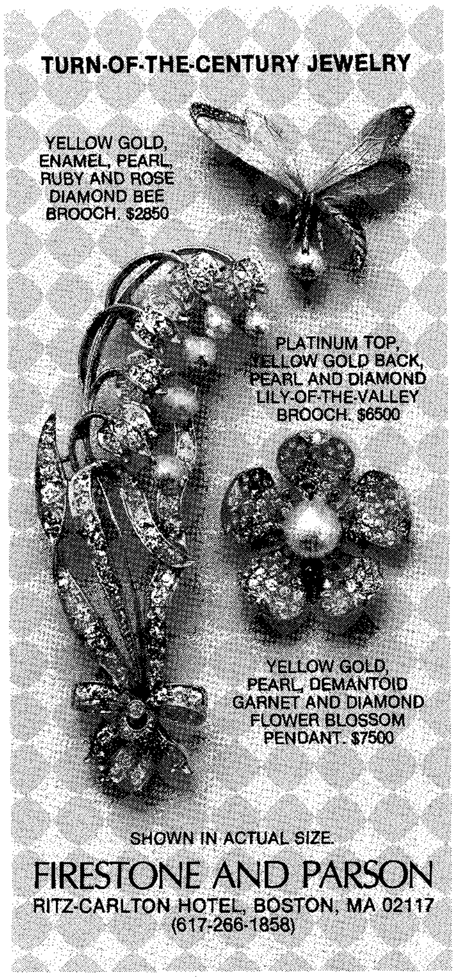
"When I hear a pianist play something I like, I gorilla it—take it over."

"I heard Beethoven was colored."

"The saxophonist Teddy Edwards once told me a pork chop ain't got an enemy in the world."

"People are dying who never died before. It's getting lonely at the top of the tree."

—WHITNEY BALLIETT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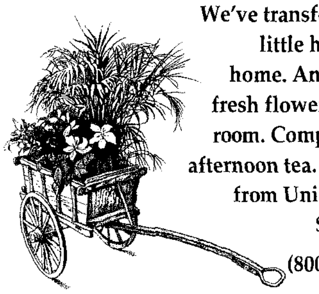

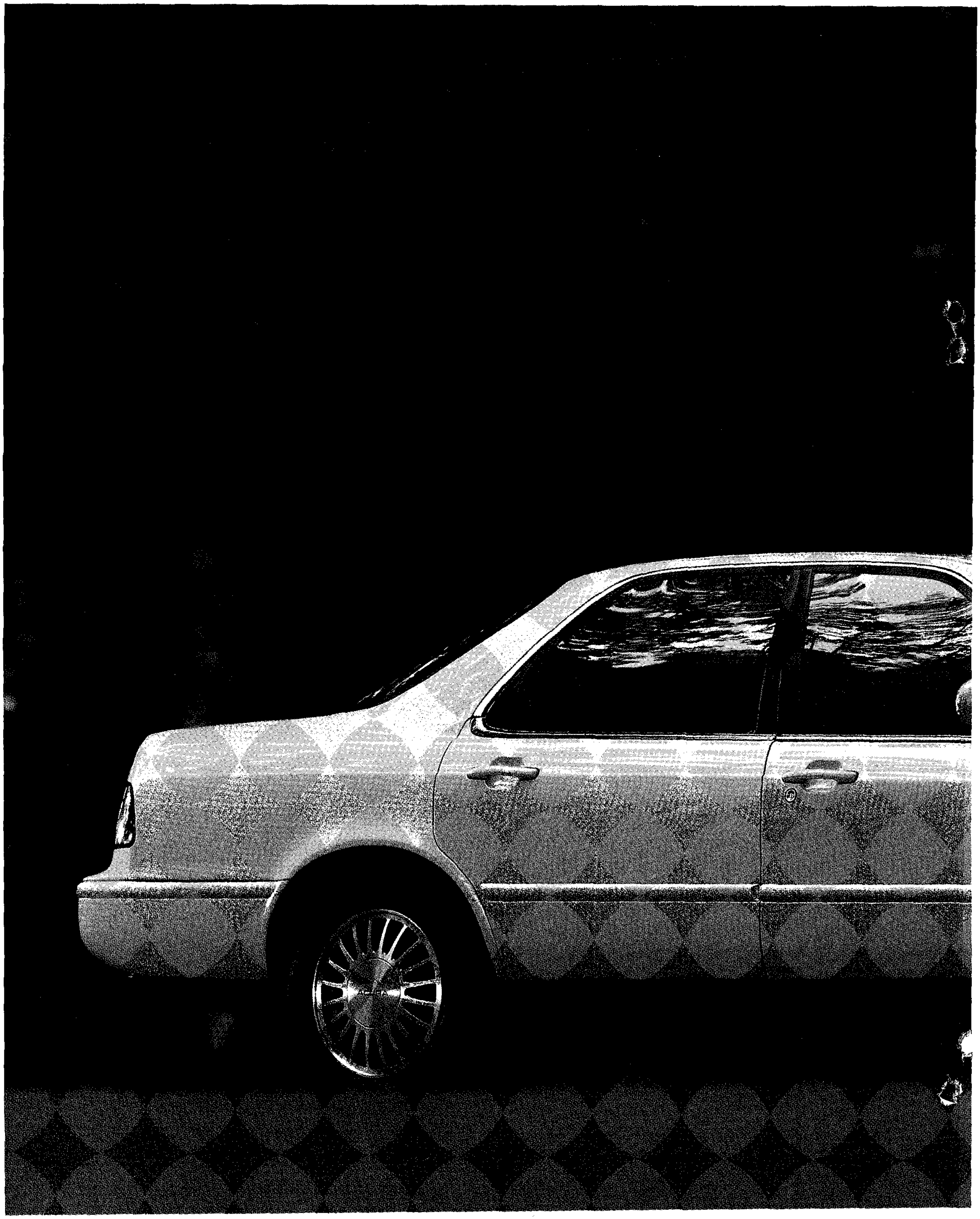

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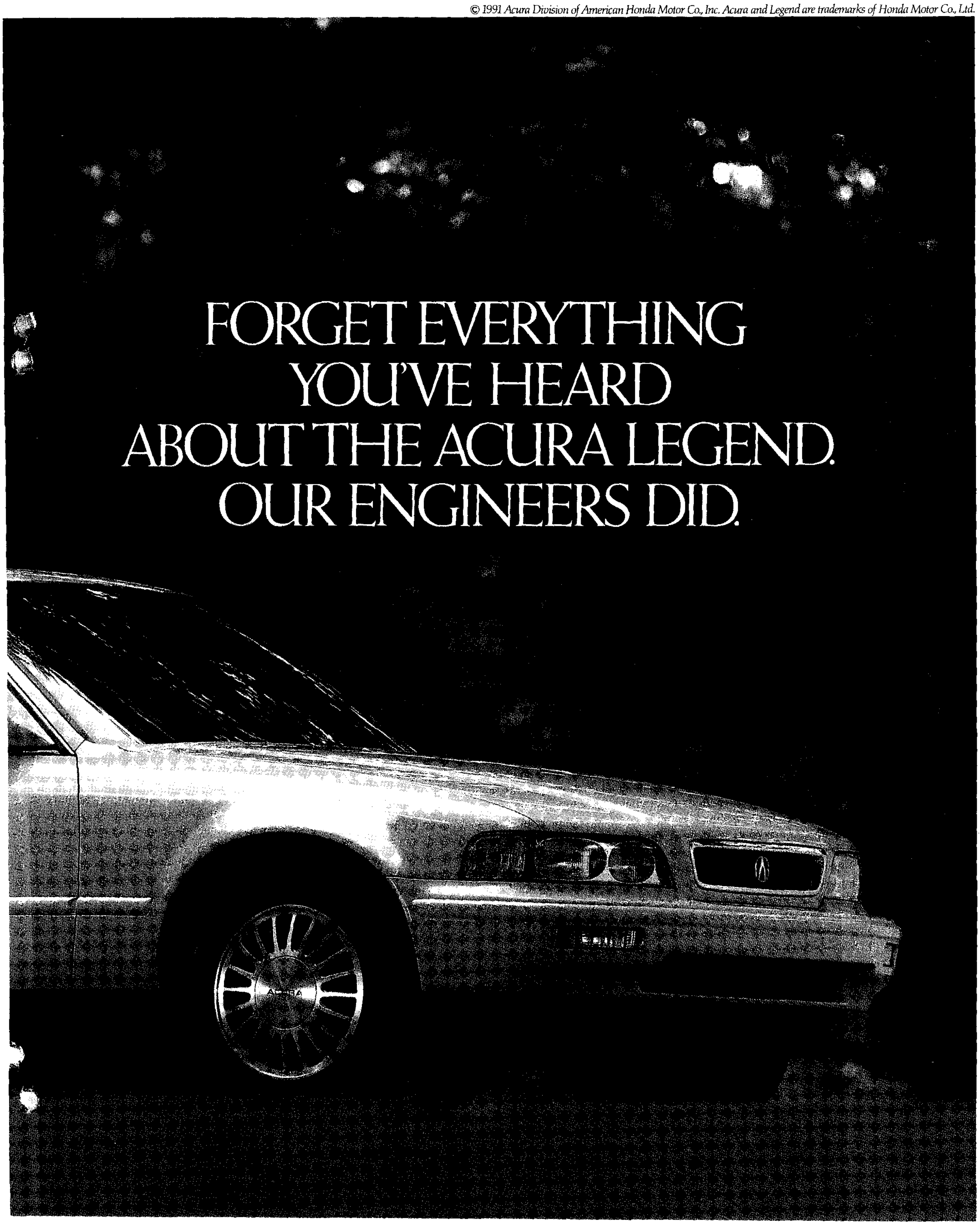

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ANNALS OF THE COLD WAR

THE YELLOW-RAIN COMPLEX—II

IN the late winter of 1984, Matthew Meselson, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Harvard University, decided to make a field trip to Thailand to study certain aspects of the behavior of wild Asian honeybees. His planned investigation was no mere academic exercise. Meselson, who was an expert on the subject of chemical and biological weapons, was looking into government charges that Soviet forces—or those of Soviet surrogates—had been waging chemical warfare against anti-Communist rebels in Laos and Cambodia, in direct violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Reports of chemical-weapons attacks began appearing in press dispatches from Southeast Asia in the mid-nineteen-seventies. For the most part, these reports were based on anecdotal evidence—interviews with Hmong tribespeople in Thai refugee camps, who related often horrifying stories of having been subjected, in their villages in the Laotian highlands, to clouds of poison that descended in the form of "yellow rain." Many of their fellow-tribespeople died as a result of the attacks, they said, and traces of the toxic material could be seen on the ground, on rooftops, and on vegetation—in the form of yellowish spots, which some Hmong claimed were still poisonous to the touch. The Hmong reports were given immeasurably greater weight in September of 1981, when Secretary of State Alexander Haig, in a speech in West Berlin, announced the discovery of powerful mycotoxins known as trichothecenes in a sample of yellow rain from an alleged attack site in Cambodia. Though mycotoxins occur naturally, the trichothecenes found in the sample were, Haig stated, "not indigenous to the region" and were present at "abnormally high levels." Because of the implied involvement of the Soviet Union, the new allegations heightened the existing atmosphere of confrontation between the two superpowers and darkened the outlook for progress in the arms-control negotiations that were then going on in Geneva.

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Meselson had developed serious reservations about the scientific basis of the American charges. By early 1982, samples recovered from alleged attack sites had been shown to consist principally of pollen grains, which the government maintained were simply a "medium" for the deadly toxins. After a close study of some of the samples, however, Meselson and several colleagues had publicly advanced a hypothesis that yellow rain was in fact a natural phenomenon, and consisted of the droppings of honeybees, laid down in mass defecation flights. In Washington, this theory was openly derided as "the great bee caper"; government spokesmen claimed that such an explanation had been carefully studied, and rejected, by responsible scientists in and out of government. One important part of the hypothesis was as yet undemonstrated: while mass cleansing flights had been documented in temperate zones—taking place in the spring, after the bees had spent the winter ingesting pollen in their hives—it was not known whether such flights were made by the wild honeybees of Southeast Asia. Meselson meant to find this out. Because the Laotian authorities would not permit him to enter Laos for the purpose, he settled on Thailand as the next-best destination. He invited Thomas Seeley, a Yale biologist and bee specialist who shared his views on the origins of yellow rain, to accompany him. It would be Seeley's second trip to Thailand; in 1979-80, he had spent nine months studying bees there and mapping the sites of their nests. The two men decided that the best time to go was in March, because, Meselson told me later, "if you were to plot on a graph when yellow rain is supposed to happen there, you would find a big peak in March and April—there were more refugee reports and more claims of finding trichothecenes in February, March, and April than at any other time of year."

MESELSON and Seeley arrived in Thailand in mid-March, where they were joined by Pongthep Akratanakul, a bee specialist from Kasetsart University, in Bangkok, who had accompanied Seeley on his earlier visit. Their first stop was a site pinpointed by Seeley and

Akratanakul in Khao Yai National Park, an enormous tract of forest some seventy-five miles northeast of Bangkok. Sure enough, they could see huge nests of the giant honeybee *Apis dorsata*, high up in a dipterocarp tree. *Apis dorsata* nests are uniquely large (about three feet in diameter) and they are also unusual in that, instead of having a papery shell like that around a wasps' nest, they consist of the bees themselves, who interlock their legs around each other in layers five or six deep, to form a curtain around the honeycomb. "On the vegetation nearby were yellow spots," Meselson recalled. "And Tom said, 'My golly, I never noticed those!' Because when he had been over there he hadn't been studying bee feces; he had been studying the defense behavior of bees."

There was no way to tell from the spots whether or not they had occurred in showers, and in order to determine that, and also the duration and scope of any such shower, the three went to the nearest town and bought six big sheets of ordinary white paper, each about a yard square. The next morning, they returned to the site at around seven-thirty, and laid out the sheets at intervals, to a point about a hundred and fifty yards away from the tree with the honeybee nests. Then they retreated, returning every thirty minutes or so to see if marks had appeared on the sheets. "Nothing happened, and nothing happened," Meselson recalled, "and then, at about nine-thirty, we found that all six sheets were covered with yellow spots. There had clearly been a shower, which can't have lasted more than thirty-five minutes, because we had looked at the sheets thirty-five minutes earlier."

From the ground, Meselson said, the mass flights of *Apis dorsata* are unnoticeable, because the nests are usually some sixty feet up in a tree. Most cleansing showers are brief: on the average, the bees leave their nest for only about four minutes before reassembling and locking themselves around the honeycomb again. The details of the flight patterns and the distribution of the droppings seemed to Meselson and Seeley to be consistent with the relatively limited areas over which the chemical-weapons attacks were said to have taken place. At one of the sites the scientists visited, they found a tree that bore some eighty *Apis dorsata* nests, which, according to

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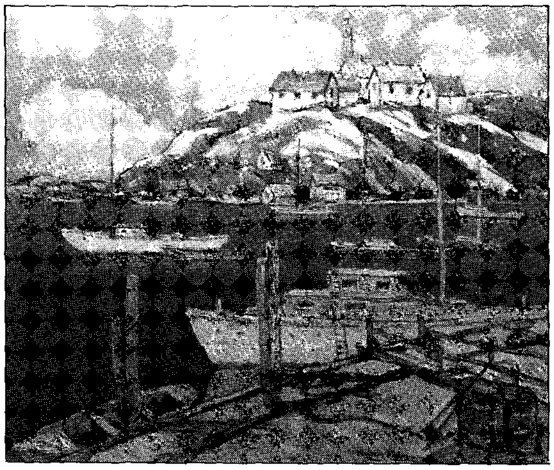

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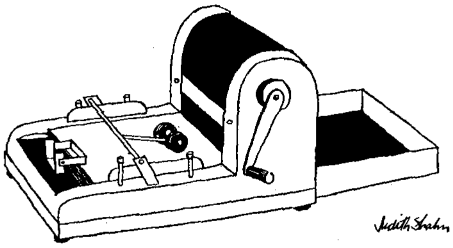
Seeley's estimate, were populated by as many as two million honeybees. Here the three men were themselves splattered with yellow droppings. "We had a tape recorder with us, and I turned it on," Meselson told me. "I think in the background you can hear the droppings going *plink, plink, plink,* but it's very faint. I had a little notebook out at the time, and a couple of yellow drops fell on one of the pages."

Meselson and Seeley spent only eight days in Thailand, but they appear to have made the most of their time. They collected samples not only of bees and bee droppings but also of moldy grain that had been stored in the tropical climate and might yield traces of trichothecenes, thus demonstrating their natural occurrence in Southeast Asia. (Naturally occurring tricothecenes had been reported on the Indian subcontinent, but no trichothecenes were found in these samples, and further studies of other such samples have been inconclusive.) With Dr. Akratanakul as an interpreter, Meselson and Seeley also asked several Thai villagers whether they had ever noticed yellow spots on leaves, and the scientists passed samples of spotted leaves among the villagers for their inspection. Most had no idea what the spots represented, but in one village, which had a tree with many bees' nests in it, inhabitants did identify the spots as bee droppings. (The women had noticed such spots on their drying laundry.) To discover what the Hmong might make of the spots, the three scientists drove to the Ban Vinai refugee camp, in eastern Thailand, where journalists and officials had interviewed Hmong and recorded their stories of chemical attacks. With Akratanakul, who spoke some Lao, again acting as interpreter, Meselson and Seeley showed the spotted leaves to sixteen small groups of Hmong chosen at random. Most of the groups seemed not to know what the spots were, although some said that they had seen such spots before. Two groups told the visitors that the spots were *kemi*, a Hmong term for the poison said to have been used against them; one man in a third group maintained that the spots were insect droppings, but after a private discussion with his fellows he said they were *kemi*.

As it happened, Meselson had already learned of another incident of yellow rain in connection with fears of a poisonous attack. Some months before he embarked on his trip to Thailand, he had received a letter from Alastair Hay, a biochemist at Leeds University, telling him of a paper in a 1977 issue of a Chinese science journal concerning an episode in Kiangsu Province in which strange showers covered the ground with yellow spots and engendered great uneasiness among the local inhabitants. Hay had learned of the paper from Dr. Ursula Allitt, a mycologist at Cambridge University, who received the journal by mail. As soon as Meselson got Hay's letter, he told me, he "zipped" across the street from his office to the Yenching Library, which contains the largest collection of Chinese books and journals in the United States, to look for the issue in question. It was unearthed for him by a Chinese biology student, who also translated the paper for him. Written by Dr. Zhang Zhongying, a pollen specialist at Nanking University, and three colleagues, it was entitled "A Study of the Origin and Pollen Analysis of 'Yellow Rain' "—this two years before the term first made its way into Western newspapers, in a piece by Stanley Karnow in the Baltimore *Sun*, in August, 1979.

Dr. Zhang and his co-authors wrote that in September of 1976 five districts in northern Kiangsu, and also a district south of the Yangtze River, reported episodes of what the people there referred to as "yellow rain." A series of powerful earthquakes had hit several Chinese provinces that year, and many people took the yellow rain as a sign that another earthquake was about to strike; others suspected that the rain was poison, and refused to drink water or eat food that might have been exposed to it. The paper describes the characteristics of the phenomenon thus:

> Yellow rain, when falling from the sky, is a viscous liquid. It is thin and long. It falls straight down onto the surface of the earth. It falls on leaves, on roofs, and falls in the fields. After it has fallen, it is flat, like the shape of a half of a soybean. Its color is light yellow to brownish yellow. Its shape is circular to oval. Its size is approximately 2-6mm, or 2-5mm x 3-6mm. . . . It sticks to the surface. When we rub it with our hands, it turns powdery. The time span of the falling of yellow rain is short. Usually it lasts not more than 20 minutes, more often ten minutes or less.



Dr. Zhang and his colleagues found that the chief constituent of the spots was pollen, mostly from elms commonly found in the Kiangsu region; they also found that the pollen was similar in many respects to the excrement of bees collected in the area where the showers had occurred. They concluded that the yellow rain that fell on northern Kiangsu in September of 1976 was not a mysterious material. "It is composed mainly of pollen of plants flowering in the region at that time," they wrote. "It is from the activities of bees."

After Meselson read the translation of the paper, he sent a copy of it to the State Department, but its receipt appears to have left no impression. The Central Intelligence Agency, which prides itself on its extensive facilities for the accession and analysis of technical and scientific journals from all over the world, had no doubt acquired the same journal that found its way through the mails to Dr. Allitt at Cambridge and to the stacks of the Yenching Library at Harvard; nonetheless, there is no evidence that the paper ever reached any of the government agencies the C.I.A. ordinarily supplies with information, or of such a report's having modified in any measure the official assertions that yellow-rain deposits in Laos and Cambodia were proof of Soviet or Soviet-supported chemical-weapons attacks. Similarly, though Dr. Allitt had forwarded the Chinese paper to British government authorities, and its contents were known to officials of the British Chemical Defence Establishment, at Porton Down, the Whitehall line on the subject continued to be reflected in a statement the Government had issued on June 7, 1982, in reply to a question in the House of Lords: "Chemical weapons, probably including mycotoxins, have been used in South East Asia."

To move forward twelve years from the publication date of Dr. Zhang's paper: During the summer of 1989, I heard from Meselson that Dr. Zhang himself would be attending the International Geological Congress, in Washington, D.C., in July, and I went to Washington to seek out Dr. Zhang at the hotel where he was staying. The

Chinese scientist, an amiable man in his early fifties, readily supplied details of the 1976 yellow-rain episodes. The Chinese authorities, he said, had taken an interest in the incidents, in the context of a broad program of geological research into various signs that might prove useful in predicting earthquakes—for example, fluctuations in the water table (marked by the rise and fall of water levels in wells) or unusual behavior in animals, birds, and even insects. Such phenomena were dealt with in many Chinese scientific papers and were also widely reported in the Chinese press; they became topics of intense discussion among the Chinese people. The initial discovery of the yellow rain had been made by a government official in the town of Xinfeng, who, upon stepping outside a meetinghouse into a courtyard, had been caught in a shower of it. Talk of the existence of the yellow showers and their possible meaning had spread "far and wide" in northern Kiangsu, Dr. Zhang said, and had brought on panicky fears of an earthquake among the people of Xinfeng, some of whom moved out of their houses and began living in the open. An alternative notion, taken up by many people, was that the yellow spots were the residue of toxic material sprayed over the town from hostile Soviet or Taiwanese aircraft. Dr. Zhang's analysis of the spots eventually showed them to be the feces of a subspecies of *Apis mellifera*, the European honeybee. That particular subspecies, he told me, had been imported into Kiangsu Province from the West for commercial honey production; the site of the principal yellow-rain episodes was near the Xinfeng bee yard, which in 1976 held a hundred and eighty hives.

What struck me most about Dr. Zhang's account was his assertion that he had had no knowledge at all of allegations of chemical-weapons attacks on the Hmong until 1982, when the BBC got in touch with him about his 1977 paper. He told me that he had been "very surprised" to learn of American charges that toxin warfare in the form of yellow rain was being waged in Southeast Asia.

AFTER Meselson's return from Thailand, he and several of his associates began to publish their findings regarding yellow rain in various scientific publications. The first of

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these reports was a paper entitled "Yellow Rain—A Palynological Analysis," which, under the joint byline of Meselson and Joan Nowicke, a pollen expert at the Smithsonian Institution, appeared in the British journal *Nature* in May, 1984. The paper summarized the analysis of eleven yellow-rain samples, and stated that the high percentage of pollen in the samples and the many different pollen types in each sample "lead us to conclude that the yellow-rain samples we examined are probably honey-bee faeces." A second article—by Seeley, Nowicke, Meselson, Jeanne Guillemin (a professor of sociology at Boston College), and Akratanakul—appeared in the September, 1985, issue of *Scientific American*. Illustrated with a color photograph of yellow-spotted vegetation in the Khao Yai National Park and with scanning electron micrographs of pollen in a yellow-rain deposit and in honeybee feces, the article reviewed the history of the yellow-rain controversy, detailed the observations by Meselson, Seeley, and Akratanakul of honeybee behavior in Thai forests, and offered a critical analysis of the accounts given by Hmong refugees to investigators concerning their experiences as witnesses or victims of chemical-weapons attacks.

The article raised questions about the way the interviews of the Hmong had been carried out. It noted that the refugees selected for interviews had already said they had been victims of or witnesses to chemical-weapons attacks, that such interviews were conducted without proper controls for preventing biased results, that the questions asked often presumed the existence of the attacks, and that the refugees had not been probed for alternative explanations of their complaints. The article also noted that the Army had conducted refined tests of some eighty environmental samples for trichothecenes and had produced uniformly negative findings; with regard to early tests, conducted by Dr. Chester Mirocha, at the University of Minnesota, and Dr. Joseph Rosen, at Rutgers University, in which high levels of trichothecenes had been found, the article raised questions about experimental procedures and also about the authenticity of the samples. In conclusion, the authors declared their belief that yellow rain consisted of the feces of honeybees and was not an agent of chemical warfare, and they stated that, while it could not be proved that some kind of chemical warfare had not taken place in Southeast Asia, the government's evidence was "ambiguous and conflicting." This and other articles in the scientific press provoked Drs. Mirocha and Rosen to defend the accuracy of their analyses vigorously, and the upshot was a long-lived and sometimes acrid exchange of correspondence in various "Letters to the Editor" columns.

On the day after the *Scientific American* article appeared, a memorandum drawn up in the State Department offered guidance for handling press inquiries about the Meselson hypothesis as set forth in the article. The memorandum recalled the position previously taken by the Department—that "such a theory ignores, and is inconsistent with, the large body of scientific as well as other factual evidence"—and it asserted, "Our conclusions stand."

Meanwhile, the views of Meselson and his associates had come under renewed attack in certain sectors of the press—in particular, in the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. A 1986 article in *Technology Review* quotes William Kucewicz, a member of the *Journal's* editorial board and the author of most of its pieces about yellow rain, on the background of the editorial position taken by his paper:

> At the time of the Haig announcement, the press had front-page stories on yellow rain. And then it seemed to get dropped and put on the back burner by most of the media. And some people in government—in the Administration—contacted us and said, "Gee, can't you guys keep this going, because it is a vital issue." After we saw how extensive this was and what it meant for the future of arms control and how inhumane these types of weapons were, we decided to take this on as a cause.

In an attempt to pressure Congress to approve the production of binary chemical weapons, the Reagan Administration and the Pentagon were pushing the same cause on other media fronts. The United States had unilaterally ceased production of chemical weapons in 1969, and many people in the defense establishment felt that in the interim the Soviet Union had been building toward an offensive chemical-weapons capability. In the words of the British chemical-weapons expert Julian Perry Robinson, the Administration was "desperately keen" to go ahead with a binary-weapons program. But Congress was proving considerably less keen. In the last year of the Carter Administration, under pressure from the Army Chemical Corps, it had appropriated a little over three million dollars to begin building a facility for the production of 155-mm. binary nerve-gas artillery shells at the Pine Bluff Arsenal, in Arkansas. In 1981, Congress had voted funds to continue construction and to equip the factory, and in February of 1982 President Reagan asked for funds to go ahead with the production of the weapons themselves, calling the binary-weapons program "essential to the national interest." This time, Congress balked, and the proposal was eliminated from the defense-authorization bill in a House-Senate conference. Nevertheless, the Administration reintroduced the legislation in 1983, 1984, and 1985. In its efforts to portray the Soviet Union as wedded to an offensive chemical-weapons buildup, the Administration gave background briefings and leaked information to various journalists it deemed willing to convey its hard line on the issue. Thus, in the Washington *Times* of August 14, 1985, an article by Tom Diaz quoted a "highly classified" intelligence analysis—prepared by the C.I.A. and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency for the National Security Council—as saying that although a number of nations had indicated privately that their analyses supported the Administration's claims regarding Soviet involvement in chemical warfare, "for a variety of domestic reasons, most of these countries have refused to make public statements to that effect." According to Diaz, the N.S.C. analysis rejected "the 'bee-feces' theory advanced by . . . Matthew Meselson," stated that "the accumulated intelligence data and scientific scrutiny will not support these postulations," and charged the Soviet Union with being "directly involved in Laos in the support of chemical warfare operations, including storage and inspection."

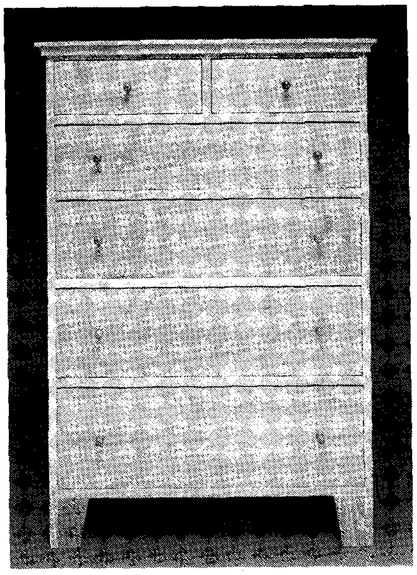
The political maneuvering by supporters of the binary program was particularly adroit in combatting public reaction to the Bhopal disaster, in December of 1984, in which at least two thousand people were killed following a gas leak at a Union Carbide plant. The catastrophe was a sobering reminder to many people of the dreadful perils attached to the storage and transportation of lethal chemicals. The program's supporters in the House put their own spin on this negative aspect of the pending legislation by proposing an amendment providing that the individual components of binary weapons be stored not just in separate cannisters or separate warehouses but in separate states. Dr. Perry Robinson wrote in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute yearbook for 1986 that the P.R. approach taken by Administration spokesmen—that the continued storage of the old-fashioned, unitary stocks of nerve gas was a Bhopal-type disaster waiting to happen—was disingenuous at best, in view of the fact that "at least one of the binary chemicals, DF, is considerably more toxic than the methyl isocyanate discharged at Bhopal."

The Administration's lobbying was helped immeasurably by a report turned out in early June of 1985—on very short notice—by a Presidential Chemical Warfare Review Commission, which was under the chairmanship of Walter Stoessel, a former Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Stoessel had already declared himself convinced of the reality of the alleged chemical attacks in Southeast Asia, and, indeed, five of the commission's eight members were known to be supporters of the binary-weapons program. It therefore came as no great surprise that the report, while critical of some aspects of American chemical-weapons policy—it observed, for example, that the Pentagon's calculations of the level of deterioration of existing stocks were "unduly pessimistic"—concluded by advocating a renewal of chemical-weapons production. On July 25th, a House-Senate conference agreed on a formula to get the United States back into the chemical-weapons business: almost twenty-two million dollars was approved for the production of the 155-mm. binary artillery shells, and over a hundred million dollars for the building of facilities for the possible future production of a binary chemical bomb known as the Bigeye. Two days later, a White House official forthrightly described the Stoessel commission report as having been "a very good vehicle for helping the program through Congress." But the quality of the White House lobbying effort was summed up most succinctly by Representative John Porter, an Illinois Republican, who had led the fight in the House against binary chemical weapons. "I've got President Reagan's tire tracks down my back," he remarked after the vote was taken.

A year later, a General Accounting Office report on the Administration's lobbying revealed that several Pentagon officials, in apparent violation of federal statutes, had hired a public-relations firm to tout the Stoessel commission report and to devise "a complete legislative and public-affairs strategy . . . to influence the public and the Congress favorably" about the commission's "viewpoint on funding new chemical warfare weapons production." The efforts had included making arrangements for commission members to appear on various television news programs. In 1986, Congress approved the manufacture of both weapons but stipulated that it would not begin before October 1, 1987. The United States again began producing chemical weapons in December of 1987.

SOME indication of the extent to which news management and selective omissions from the record affected official policy on the yellow-rain issue may be seen in a number of internal government communications that were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by Jeanne Guillemin (who is now married to Meselson) and Philip J. Hilts, who was then a reporter for the Washington *Post* and now writes on scientific subjects for the *Times*. It appears that significant ancillary information reported to the State Department from the United States Embassy in Bangkok—information essential for a prudent assessment of the reliability of some refugee accounts of chemical-weapons attacks—was consistently withheld by the Administration from the scrutiny of the press and the public.

After its beginning in the late seventies, the history of the reporting from the Bangkok Embassy of Hmong refugee accounts passed through three stages. At first, most of the reports were the result of interviews carried out by a couple of Embassy officers. To give them their due, they seem to have gone about their work, much of which they carried out in addition to their regular duties, with a growing sense that some-



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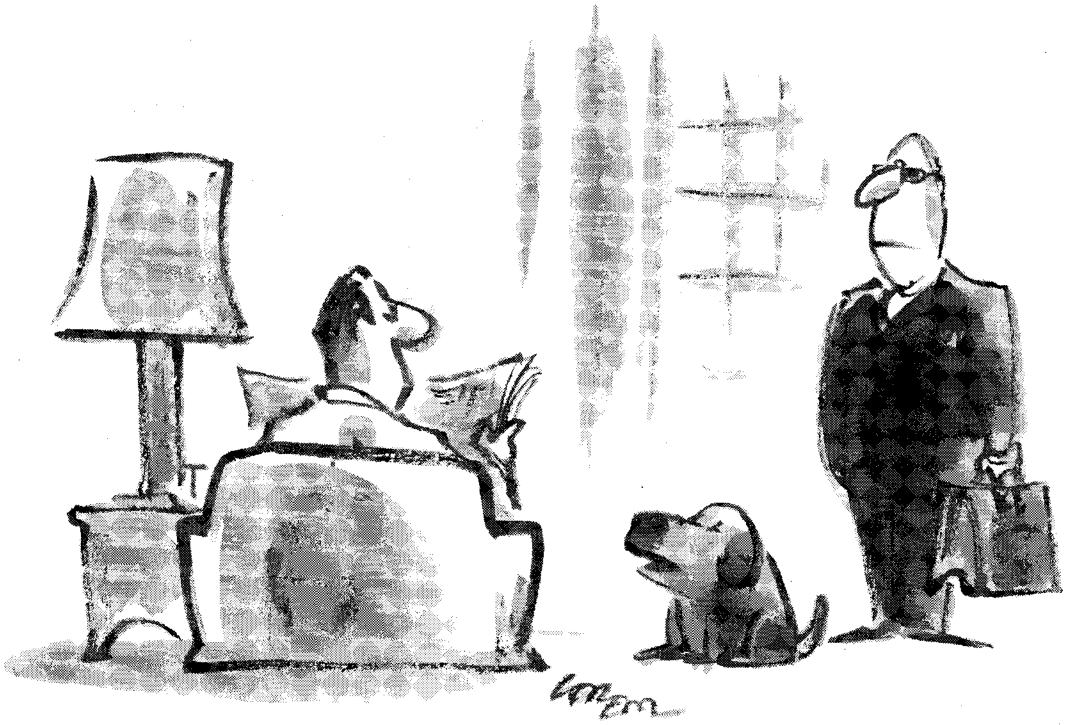

"From now on, Ted, I will speak only when adequately represented by counsel."

thing terrible was being inflicted upon defenseless people. At this stage, the observations of the Embassy employees—perhaps inevitably—were not very thorough. Later, their work was supplemented by that of visiting Army and State Department investigators, and later still—from 1981 to 1983—by the work of Dr. Amos Townsend, a retired Air Force doctor, who, with a nurse assistant, interviewed a number of refugees and reported their stories about chemical attacks to the State Department and the Pentagon. Then, in 1983, after repeated requests from the Bangkok Embassy, Washington sent out a three-man team of chemical- and biological-weapons specialists to investigate the matter systematically. This team worked in Thailand for three years. Prior to its arrival, all the Hmong interviewed—as Meselson and his colleagues noted in their *Scientific American* article—had been selected not at random but because of stories they had already told, and their accounts seem to have been accepted pretty much at face value by their interviewers. The new team's efforts included re-interviews with a number of these Hmong. A cable in January of 1984 reported that several of them "upon being re-interviewed either denied being involved in an attack and/or stated they were not an eyewitness but rather had heard of the attacks from friends." The cable summarized a recent interview with a man who identified himself as a resistance fighter against the Laotian Communist government. This man had previously stated that he saw the use of chemicals on his village "with his own eyes." He had said that "there were many airplanes which dropped chemicals," that "the planes were very high," and that "the chemical looked like white smoke when dropped." He had further said that spots appeared on vegetation and on the ground two days after one such incident, and that two to three days after the appearance of the spots the villagers became sick and many pigs and chickens died. He had estimated that six of the villagers died as a result of that attack, after suffering hemorrhages, and he had described their corpses as being covered with black spots. But the team discovered that at the time of the alleged attack the man was not living in the village where all this was supposed to have happened. The cable noted, "This witness . . . failed to answer how he could observe the attack on the village and the subsequent events while he was residing in the mountains." Similarly, a Hmong woman who had said she was a victim of a chemical attack denied, upon being re-interviewed, that she had ever said so; she now said only that airplanes had flown over her village every two or three days at a very high altitude.

The team also interviewed Khmer guerrillas who had been hospitalized for "alleged exposure to gas." The results hardly supported the allegation. In March of 1985, the team cabled Washington that when its representatives approached one of the guerrillas, he responded by saying, "Why do you want to interview me? I will tell you the same story as the rest, since we have been ordered to by our military leader." The cable went on, "The team also interviewed several other guerrillas, but their stories remained virtually the same. The individual soldiers were too concerned about being shot for disobeying orders to do otherwise."

While sending along these reëvaluations, the team also reported several new complaints of chemical attacks. In May, 1984, for instance, the team relayed an interview with a forty-year-old Hmong woman who claimed to have lost six of her ten children in a chemical attack from a helicopter late in 1983. The attack took place on a rice field in which twenty-two Hmong were working, she said, and she had heard an explosion, which was followed by cream-colored rain. The woman said she had immediately become dizzy and the dizziness had persisted for ten days. Other symptoms she reported were bloody diarrhea and the vomiting of blood, and she said she had smoked opium as a medicinal treatment. Her children, ranging in age from five months to twelve years, also vomited blood and suffered from bloody diarrhea, she said, and some of them developed blisters over their entire bodies; the six children who died did so within seventeen days of the attack. She also reported that pigs and poultry fell sick, and that the leaves of plants in the area withered. A resistance group—a possible military target—was known to be in the area, she said.

One of the Hmong interviewed by

the team was a resistance leader who had recently arrived in Thailand after operating for eight years in the jungle around the mountain of Phu Bia, the site of the most widely reported chemical attacks on the Hmong resistance. He said he had never experienced such an attack and had never seen evidence of the use of chemical weapons. "When questioned why many other Hmong refugees relate accounts of CBW attacks and he, as a resident of Phu Bia for eight years, had seen nothing, [he] stated that he was an educated man who related what he saw and not what he felt," the team reported. "He added that other Hmong are different, in that they relate what they hear and feel and not what they see, and that he always speaks the truth."

The reservations of the Hmong resistance leader were not very different from those expressed to Washington from time to time by the chemical-warfare team. In another May, 1984, cable, the team members told Washington, "Neither the team chief nor the Thai . . . interpreter found [names of Hmong deleted] to be credible witnesses of CBW attacks. They seemed to be fabricating their accounts during the interviews." The team also noted that a Hmong leader in the Ban Vinai camp had informed an Embassy officer in December, 1980, that the last reliable gassing report he had heard concerned an incident in September of 1979; there were, nevertheless, "many accounts" of chemical attacks in the period between September, 1979, and December, 1980, and the Hmong leader had "apparently felt obliged to communicate his own skepticism of their accuracy." The cable concluded, "The question is not whether Hmong refugees lie but whether Hmong refugees are accurate reporters of reality. Generally, we have not found them to be so, and believe that heir stories must be supported by external and, if possible, objective means."

In reporting the growing doubts about the credibility of Hmong testimony, I do not wish to imply any denigration of the character of the Hmong. The situation of these people was desperate. Whatever else may have been happening, Hmong who were resisting the Vietnamese-supported regime in Laos had been subjected to severe military and political harassment. They had been kept on the move under conditions of great stress—struggling through the jungle for long periods, while suffering from exhaustion, malnutrition, and disease—and, not surprisingly, they were in bad shape physically and mentally by the time they wound up in Thai refugee camps. If Chinese villagers could interpret the sudden appearance of yellow spots on the ground as evidence that poison had been laid down by hostile aircraft, why not the Hmong? Moreover, the increasing interest of American officials in the yellow deposits, and the connection they made between the deposits and chemical-weapons attacks, are hardly likely to have lessened the dramatic quality of refugee accounts. As Meselson himself pointed out, swarms of *Apis dorsata* engaged in mass defecation can usually be neither seen nor heard from the ground, because of the great height at which they make those flights. It is also worth noting that the Hmong tended to be almost obsessed with American, Vietnamese, and Laotian military planes; they relied on American aircraft for drops of food supplies, and they had to be constantly on the lookout for enemy aircraft. Their accounts of their experiences under the chaotic conditions prevailing in Laos in the seventies and early eighties may well have consisted of a complicated blend of fact and fiction, in which day-to-day practicalities and fabulous elaborations intertwined.

One American I talked to who has had a good deal of experience with the Hmong is Wilbur Garrett, until recently the editor of *National Geographic*. Since 1974, Garrett, a vigorous man with a blunt way of expressing himself, has written or supervised the assignment and preparation of several articles describing the plight of the Hmong and containing many interviews with them. He told me that in China, where the Hmong originated, and where many still live, they were known as Miao, which means "barbarians," and that the name "Meo" applied to them by the Laotians carries the same connotation of barbarism. The Meo, however, have always referred to themselves by the more dignified name "Hmong," meaning "free men." At the request of a prominent English-speaking Hmong tribesman who had emigrated to the United States, Garrett made a point of using this name in the *National Geo-*

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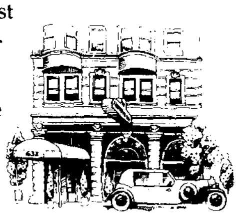

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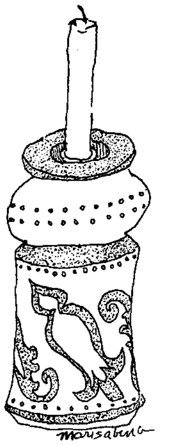
graphic—to such effect that "Hmong" has become the name generally applied to them by Westerners. Whatever the warmth of Garrett's journalistic gesture, I found his appraisal of the Hmong to be other than sentimental. "The Hmong are not charming, simple, childlike people," he told me. "They are very tough—very sharp and wily. They've had to be wily. They're not childlike in any way. They may not be sophisticated, but when they're exposed to technology they learn very quickly. That's why they were the most popular fighters with our people"—as a major part of a C.I.A.-backed secret army in Laos. "It was because they were so damn good and learned quickly and did things right."

The circumstances of the Hmong refugees' entry into Thailand were extremely harsh, Garrett told me. "I think part of the policy of the Thais at that time was to force them back," he said. "And a lot of the Thai types—soldiers, police, whatever—would beat and rob them when they came across the border. If you go into a Thai refugee camp, the Hmong will give you horror stories about yellow rain because they know it's the kind of thing that gets attention and maybe a visa out. They want to come to the United States, and we want to hear about yellow rain—they'll tell us about it. If we want to hear about brutality, they'll tell us about that. These are desperate people, wanting out. So when they learn that a bunch of U.S. interrogators are coming in with clipboards and want to hear about yellow rain— I guarantee that the Hmong are some of the best storytellers on earth. They can make up stories faster than you and I can write them down."

In November of 1985, the chemical-warfare team, in a section of their quarterly report headed "Conclusions to Date," told Washington that "information regarding the use of 'yellow rain' against the Hmong in Laos remains too incomplete or implausible" to serve as the basis for any conclusions. Concerning the reported chemical-weapons attacks against the Khmer resistance in Cambodia, the team observed, "The probable use of riot-control agents and the possible use of an incapacitant may have occurred against Khmer resistance forces," but "definition of the alleged use of an incapacitant or knockout gas cannot be made, because of contributing factors such as malaria, concussion, smoke inhalation, and, more importantly, the lack of timely access to 'victims.' " The Reagan Administration withheld not only the details but the substance of these and other cabled reports, which seem to have come too late to be anything but an embarrassment. No State Department officer who valued his career was likely to contradict the official line. The President himself—on June 17, 1982, in an address at the United Nations—had spoken of toxin attacks in Southeast Asia and elsewhere by or on behalf of the Soviet Union. The reports from the chemical-weapons team in Thailand therefore fell into a sort of informational black hole.



As the evidence for the reality of toxin warfare in Southeast Asia unravelled, the nearest the Administration ever came to modifying its charges was to concede in official communications—for example, in a February, 1984, report to the United Nations, and in a Presidential report to Congress at the beginning of 1985—that the number of reported chemical-weapons fatalities had decreased in 1983, and that it had no "confirmed" accounts of chemical-weapons attacks in 1984. Various government spokesmen suggested that the reason for the seeming lull was the government's unstinting efforts to publicize the evident violations of the Geneva Protocol and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention—efforts that, it was intimated, had had the effect of discouraging further attacks. An article in the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal* on November 4, 1985, referred to the apparent chemical ceasefire as "an accomplishment for which the Reagan administration and The Wall Street Journal can claim some credit."

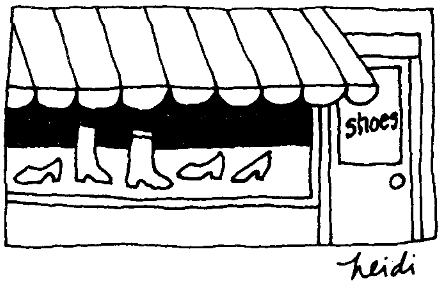
Despite the weakness of the government's case—and, of course, in the absence of data on the secret intelligence that the government claimed to have in support of its assertions—it seemed to me, after reading the cable traffic from Bangkok, that some Hmong in Laos may well have been exposed to one or more forms of incapacitating agents directed against them by Vietnamese or Laotian Army units. But such a case does not seem to be bolstered by strong, direct evidence—at least, evidence not classified. The evidence made public has been almost entirely anecdotal. Further, it seems worth observing that if such attacks did occur the government would have had no great incentive to publicize them. When the American military quit Vietnam, it abandoned, among other supplies, a substantial stockpile of CS gas, and also equipment for delivering it; these supplies were thus available to the Vietnamese Communists, and presumably continued to be available to them when they moved into Laos and Cambodia. A suggestion that any of the alleged chemical-weapons attacks in Southeast Asia might actually have been made with CS gas originally intended to flush the Vietcong out of their underground bunkers is hardly likely to have been entertained in official Washington.

DESPITE the drying up of "confirmed" lethal chemical attacks in Southeast Asia (and a concurrent erosion of the government's credibility within the nongovernmental scientific community), Administration spokesmen and their sympathizers continued to express often vehement criticism of Matthew Meselson's theory that bees were the source of yellow rain. Much of the criticism was of a long-lasting and unforgiving quality. For example, Representative Jim Leach, a Republican of Iowa, who is generally moderate in his views, told me in a May, 1988, interview that, while he considered Meselson to be "one of the most attractive, persuasive people in the history of American science," he found Meselson's "conclusions and attitudes" concerning the yellow-rain issue to be "reprehensible"—a word he uttered with considerable emphasis. Leach, who was one of the earliest and most outspoken congressional supporters of the government's charges of yellow-rain attacks, explained Meselson's opposition to United States chemical-weapons policy by noting that Meselson had been "brought up in the anti-Vietnam War movement" and was "embedded in it to the point where he disbelieves his government." Meselson, he said, had had a hard time debating him. "I have been one of the leaders in Congress on all the arms-control issues," he said. "I am very pro-arms-control, and I spent two years of my life at the Geneva disarmament conference, so he can't attack my credentials. I had one personal conversation with Meselson in which he laid it all out to me, and I asked him, 'Don't you think it's very likely that these weapons are being used?' And he said, 'No.' And I said, 'Don't you think it's eighty-five or ninety per cent likely?' He said, 'Yes, but, Jim, you must remember that we are embarking on some of the most important arms-control negotiations in history, and we cannot undercut them. That is the major issue.' And I said, 'Dr. Meselson, that's a *political* judgment.' ”

What Leach and other officials in Washington seemed to resent most was what they saw as Meselson's propensity for generating publicity for himself and his cause in the guise of furthering scientific inquiry. Leach maintained that the “espionage evidence” on chemical-weapons attacks in Southeast Asia was so extensive that Meselson's bee theory was “just ridiculous,” and he went on to make elliptical allusions —“Bees, after all, don't ride in cockpits”; “Bees don't speak Russian”—to such evidence. “All they've proved is that Asian bees defecate in flight,” he said, of Meselson's and Seeley's efforts in Thailand. “That is the limit of their conclusions. This scientist”—Meselson—“even announced at one press conference that he had the good fortune to be so hit. I get close to apoplectic on this issue. Meselson spends his life going to editorial-board meetings and holding press conferences on this issue. I mean, he'd rather be on the front page than doing serious work.”

The basic position taken by present or former government officials whom I interviewed in the latter part of the nineteen-eighties seemed to be that the credibility of the government's charges rested on the totality of the evidence, including classified information. These people expressed confidence in the broad circumstantial case, and they looked upon Meselson's examination of specific aspects of it less as disinterested scientific criticism than as part of a dismayingly effective campaign against a well-intentioned American policy—a policy aimed at discouraging the international spread of chemical weapons. This argument was clearly put by Douglas Feith, a former Pentagon official concerned with chemical- and biological-weapons policy. “It's the whole that you have to examine,” Feith told me. “The key to Meselson's success polemically—and he's an absolutely brilliant polemicist—is that he forces people to, in effect, look into a microscope, so that they never see more than a few angstroms' width on the subject at any given time. As long as he can keep your attention focussed on a leaf sample and the way it, alone, was tested, he can dazzle you with why a specific result is not reliable, and he can tell you about [a refugee] interview and tell you why it was done wrong.” If a hundred per cent of the government's case were based on poorly conducted refugee interviews, Feith went on, “I would say, 'All right, we shouldn't put too much credence on that one type of evidence.' But reasonable people take the whole situation into account, and they put the refugee testimony together with the environmental samples, together with the biological samples, together with what we know about Soviet client operations in the area, together with what we know about their operations in other areas, like Afghanistan.” Meselson, he said, had attacked the government for having made allegations without being able to establish its case to the “enormously high standard of proof” that Meselson considered necessary.

“That raises a very interesting and important question about government policy,” Feith continued. “Should the government refrain from raising allegations of violations of arms-control treaties unless we can prove to an effective certainty that the violation has occurred? How much evidence is required before we make an allegation? I had innumerable diplomatic meetings on this subject, because I was responsible for such matters at the Pentagon. When I used to meet with foreign ambassadors, and with the delegates to the arms-control talks in Geneva, and this kind of stuff came up, the representatives of many of these countries—for their own political reasons—didn't want to cross the Soviets, or, if they were democratic countries, didn't want to suffer the political heat at home that the U.S. suffered in raising these allegations. They were looking for excuses not to do anything. And they could always rely on Meselson, because he was a one-man band on this subject. I used to say to them, 'The real issue that the international community has to deal with is what should be done with the evidence the U.S. government has collected.' And what *they* were saying was that if the United States did not *prove* its case, and prove it to the standards that Meselson set, then the international community should do nothing. . . . That's what I keep coming back to: the real question is not how well the United States government made its case but whether the Soviets used chemical weapons or not. What I really fault Meselson for—and Meselson is a brilliant guy and a great debater, and I take my hat off to him—is that he managed to completely confound the press and public on this issue.”



Among Reagan Administration officials, the issue of yellow rain continued to be portrayed as a serious impediment to fruitful negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on chemical disarmament. “YELLOW RAIN DAMPENS TREATY HOPES” was the headline of an article by Gary Crocker, the senior intelligence analyst at the State Department, in the July, 1986, issue of *NBC Defense & Technology International*, a magazine devoted to national-security issues. In a December 5, 1988, letter to the *Times* about an editorial that had commented approvingly on Meselson's “lonely” struggle to bring aspects of the yellow-rain issue to light, Crocker declared that characterizing the disagreement as “one between a lone champion of scientific truth and a politically motivated State Department . . . grossly oversimplifies this complex issue.” He stated that the original judgment by the government was based on intelligence estimates and had been reached with the participation of all relevant federal agencies and Congress, and that the judgment had been reaffirmed in all of the President's Arms Control Compliance reports to date. Meselson's bee-feces hypothesis, he claimed, “fails to address a large body of solid international evidence on chemical warfare in Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan.”

I interviewed Crocker in the fall of

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1987, in an office at the State Department which was clearly not his own: except for a filing cabinet with a combination lock, it had none of the trappings of a high-security operation; it seemed to be part of an area shared by Foreign Service officers passing through town and in need of temporary office space. Crocker, a rather gray-faced man of medium height, carries himself with a generally overworked air but has an open and easy manner. Speaking of the slow pace of negotiations at the Geneva disarmament conference on an international convention to ban the possession of chemical weapons, he told me, "I guess what infuriates me is the criticism heaped on the United States all the time . . . because I think this is one area where the United States record is extremely good. *We* haven't used lethal chemical agents. We didn't use them in Vietnam. We stopped building them seventeen years ago and literally got out of the business. And we destroyed all our biological weapons. The Soviets don't necessarily *believe* that. I could perhaps say, realistically, that they have a hard time believing we destroyed that capability. But we did." The Soviets claimed that their chemical-weapons stockpiles were no bigger than ours, he said, but there was "no way" in which he believed that. "If the Soviets have three times as many tanks, four to five times as much artillery, twelve times as many short-range missiles, God knows what it is when you measure chemicals," he said. "I don't even have a range of what it might be, but it's an *overwhelming* chemical capability." The total amount of chemical weapons possessed by the United States, he said, "even counting old stuff that probably isn't any good," was about thirty thousand tons "on a good day." Some of that tonnage, he said, was in bulk chemicals and some in munitions. As for the Soviets, Crocker said that chemical warfare was "built into everything—their Army, Navy, Air Force," and he added, "They've got twenty thousand vehicles specially designed for operating in a chemical, nuclear, and biological environment. We know that it's an important thing for them." The Soviets, he said, had produced "hundreds of thousands of tons" of the older agents, such as the nerve gases tabun, sarin, and soman, "and we also know that they have been producing new agents."

Turning to the reported use of chemical weapons in Laos, Cambodia, and Afghanistan, Crocker said that mycotoxins had been found in some attack-site samples that bore no yellow spots at all, while admitting, interestingly, that "an awful lot of our environmental samples were nothing but bee spots." He also said that the Canadians, the French, the Thais, the Chinese, the United States Food and Drug Administration, and a laboratory in "another country" which "won't go public" with the information had all found toxins in samples from attack sites. He declared that when the Chinese made an incursion into Vietnam in 1979 their troops ran into trip-wire devices that released a chemical agent similar to that reportedly found in Laos.

I asked Crocker why the Soviets would use chemical agents against the Hmong when so many other means of attack were open to them.

"The Soviets believe that certain kinds of chemical weapons are the best thing to use against guerrilla insurgency groups," he replied. American specialists had talked to "lots of Third World people" who had attended a Soviet "chemical-warfare school," he said, and "we have their notes" from the classes. "In Laos, you have this stubborn resistance," he went on. "Located where? Unimportant? No! *Extremely* important strategic area to the Soviet Union." He began moving a pencil about various parts of the desk top. "*This*"—tapping—"is Laos. *This* is China. This is where forty thousand Vietnamese, their garrisons, are. This"—another tap—"is where the forces are on the Chinese border. *Here* are the Laotian highlands, just where you want to put your antennas and all the rest of that crap." Tapping sharply: "Right here! That's where this resistance lives—that's their *home*, has been for hundreds and hundreds of years—and they're a nuisance. You want to go in there with a bunch of Lao and try to wipe them out? These are ferocious fighters, trained by the U.S., the French. What do you do to get them out? You want to use nerve agent? You could kill fifty thousand Hmong. They'd be lying dead there, rotting. So what's the agent of choice? An agent that contaminates the food, the water, kills the livestock, will dramatically kill *some* people, but mostly will make some people sick and drive them out, so they won't come back. With these people, there is a bond with their home—that's where they want to be—but they are not going to come back if it's desecrated. So you use toxin. It does *all* the things you want, and you use it at very low levels. You don't waste troops by sending them up there. It's isolated. There's not going to be a big international investigation. So it becomes the perfect thing. It also creates terror."

The United States government, Crocker said, had "incontrovertible evidence" that the Soviets had brought a whole range of chemical weapons—"nerve agents, phosgene, the whole works"—into Afghanistan, and had been waging chemical warfare against the Afghan resistance. He said that Soviet doctrine on the uses of chemical weapons was well known. "In Germany, for example," he said. "With an airfield, you want to put chemical on that, rather than blow the hell out of it with a nuclear weapon. You put a nerve agent on there which will kill everybody, and then you can fly in and use it yourself." The Soviets, Crocker said, possessed a wide range of chemical weapons, including "incapacitants, nerve types, psychosomatic drugs—things that will affect the nervous system, and things that won't necessarily kill people but will knock 'em out, put 'em out of action."

Crocker asserted that the threat of the spread of chemical weapons was at the heart of United States policy in pushing for an international treaty to ban them and in simultaneously maintaining its own chemical deterrent. He pointed to the disturbing proliferation of these weapons throughout the Third World during the previous decade. Iraq, he said, had seen that "years of using chemical warfare brought no penalty." If Iraq—and Iran, for that matter—were to become expert in this branch of warfare, he said, they could serve as major sources of supply for countries that wanted "to balance off their big neighbor next door." With his pencil, he tapped the table again. "Why are we in this mess? One of the reasons we're in this mess is because of this right here!" Reaching across the desk, he rapped on a copy of the current issue of *Foreign Policy*, which contained a piece by Meselson, Guillemin, and Perry Robinson entitled "Yellow Rain: The Story Collapses." The authors had summarized the history of the controversy, marshalling the government's evidence that yellow rain was a chemical weapon and detailing the refutations of that evidence. The piece concluded:

> In retrospect, it is easy to see how the administration came to be in its present predicament. . . . The administration ignored—indeed bypassed—the available institutional arrangements for obtaining high-level scientific advice. The president's science adviser, the Department of Defense Science Board, and the National Academy of Sciences were not asked to evaluate the evidence before policy was set. Instead . . . the Reagan administration chose to pursue a strategy of maximum public impact. The secretary of state's dramatic announcement in West Berlin in 1981 then locked the administration into a political position from which it has yet to extricate itself.

"We're trying to accomplish something, and this attack on the government is *not* helpful," Crocker said. "This gives the sense that all that's at issue is a thing called yellow rain. We have all these other kinds of agents and ranges of delivery systems—so, even if the government said, 'Meselson's right about the bees,' what do we do about all the rest of the stuff? I think the government has acted responsibly. I've worked through different Administrations as a bureaucrat, and I have a lot of friends who work on this subject. We're not involved with politics and propaganda. I'll be here through the next Administration and probably the next after that. But we set the policy, really. The policy has been to stop chemical warfare—to get a damn treaty that we could all live with, and to try to do something about this problem. Whenever you get evidence of violations, you want it to surface as fast as possible, because the first objective is to stop the attack and the other objective is to find out what's being used, so you can provide the victims with protection. . . . Plus, *our* forces may hit this crap someday in the Third World; it might be in the Persian Gulf tomorrow, for all I know. We're questioning NATO's protective equipment, based on what we found out in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, because *we* think the Soviets have got stuff that can defeat that equipment. That's the importance of this whole story. If you are constantly throwing up doubts about the credibility of the government, then we are not going to get the international support that we want." Crocker maintained that if the United States could

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—Michael Longley

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have pulled "all of these other countries together, we would have stopped it"—continued violations of existing chemical- and biological-warfare agreements—"a long time ago, and I don't think we would have been in this Iran-Iraq mess."

Reverting to Meselson's criticism of the reliability of the scientific evidence put forward by the government, Crocker expressed firm confidence in Dr. Chester Mirocha, who had been sent a half dozen of the earliest yellow-rain samples collected and had found unnaturally high levels of trichothecenes in five of them. Dr. Mirocha had been put "through the wringer" concerning his scientific methodology, Crocker said, and this searching examination had found no errors in his experimental techniques. "The Army lab looked at eighty-some samples, but you have to look at the samples," he said. "The ones from attacks are very old, most of them years, two or three years. . . . There's a question whether they would have found anything anyway."

Crocker concluded, "One thing I can say about Dr. Mirocha is that he is not involved in politics. He's a pure scientist. Matt Meselson is not. He testifies on the Hill, he's been a consultant to the government, he's an involved person, with his own views." But the real importance of the issue, he said, transcended differing interpretations of available scientific data. "We have two treaties dealing with this type of warfare"—the Geneva Protocol and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention—"and we say that the Soviets have violated both of them. This is not about scientific evidence. It's not about mycotoxins. It's about whether or not we can trust the Russians."

President Jimmy Carter became bitterly disillusioned in the course of his attempts to deal with the Soviet Union, in large part because of its increasingly aggressive military behavior, which culminated in the invasion of Afghanistan, in December, 1979. The Reagan Administration's campaign to publicize yellow-rain attacks in Southeast Asia was probably strongly influenced by a public-relations effort put into high gear by the Carter Administration shortly after the Afghanistan invasion, and set off by reports of a serious accident at a secret biological-weapons-research facility on the southern outskirts of Sverdlovsk, a city in the Ural Mountains which is off limits to foreigners. An explosion was said to have taken place in which large quantities of lethal anthrax spores were released, bringing about the death of many of the area's inhabitants.

Anthrax, while it is primarily a disease that affects livestock, can also attack human beings, often with fatal consequences. The word itself is from the Greek and means "coal"; the disease is probably so called because it often raises pustules with a coal-black center on the skin of its victims. Anthrax is thought to have been the fifth plague of Egypt, in which all of Egypt's cattle died. Virgil describes the disease in his "Georgics." In more recent times, it was known as "bane"; in the seventeenth century, a pandemic known as the Black Bane swept through Europe, killing some sixty thousand cattle. Within the array of known biological weapons, anthrax has come to acquire something of a generic quality.

During the Second World War, preparations for or against biological warfare were undertaken by nearly all the major powers. In September, 1939, Hitler bragged of possessing a secret weapon—one with which, he declared, "we cannot be attacked"—and fears were expressed, notably among the British military, that the secret weapon might consist of biological-warfare agents. These fears led to a number of biological-warfare experiments by British scientists. The experiments included the release of anthrax spores on the small island of Gruinard, off the west coast of Scotland, which resulted in the death of flocks of sheep put there for test purposes and rendered the island uninhabitable for more than forty years. While the British were carrying out these experiments, the Japanese military was actively developing anthrax and other biological and toxin weapons. Beginning in 1940, it conducted a series of experiments in which prisoners of war, mostly Chinese, were exposed to various pathogens, including anthrax spores, so that Japanese weapons specialists could see just how quickly human beings would succumb to this form of warfare. After the Japanese surrender, none of the Japanese officers responsible for these experiments were brought to judicial account by the American occupation authorities; they were allowed to bargain their way out of prosecution by agreeing to divulge their detailed knowledge, and the whole matter was thereupon hushed up by the American military for several decades—a silence that extended past the signing of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention—under the cloak of national security.

According to an article in the January/February, 1987, issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, by Barton J. Bernstein, a historian at Stanford University, the British seriously considered the use of anthrax-loaded bombs on German cities at one stage of the war, despite the prohibitions of the Geneva Protocol, of which Britain was a leading signatory. (Dr. Bernstein's article was based on papers that had recently been declassified by the British government.) In February, 1944, Winston Churchill received a "Most Secret" memorandum from Lord Cherwell, his chief science adviser. In the memorandum Cherwell noted the speedy lethality of anthrax spores among animals. "There is no known cure and no effective prophylaxis," he wrote. "There is little doubt that it is equally lethal to human beings." Cherwell wrote that anthrax spores could lie dormant on the ground for months or even years, and could be activated by explosions, or just by passing cars or by people walking nearby; anthrax could thus be used not only to kill people in great numbers but to render large areas uninhabitable. In fact, Cherwell believed, anthrax was an ideal weapon for use against the Germans. He urged that Britain obtain anthrax bombs from the United States, which, under conditions of extreme secrecy, had built a plant to manufacture such weapons, probably near Terre Haute, Indiana. By May, 1944, a preliminary batch of anthrax bombs from this plant had been delivered to Britain, and Churchill's military advisers began planning to initiate biological warfare against Germany sometime in 1945. However, partly because of delays in production of a sufficient number of bombs but chiefly because of the progress of the Allied war effort and fears of retaliatory chemical- and biological-warfare strikes by the Germans, the proposed anthrax-bomb attacks on German cities never got beyond the planning stage.

The incident at Sverdlovsk was brought to public attention in this country almost a year after its supposed occurrence, at a press briefing at the State Department on March 18, 1980, during which it was announced that the government had received "disturbing indications" that a large number of people in Sverdlovsk had been accidentally contaminated during the previous spring by "some sort of lethal biological agent." The incident raised questions about whether the Soviet Union had violated the terms of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Department spokesman said, and the United States had "expressed concern to the Soviet Union about these reports." The State Department revelation was front-page news here and in Western Europe the following day. Bernard Gwertzman, in a story in the *Times*, reported that an unnamed Washington official had told him that there was "evidence that 300 to 500 people had died in a matter of hours" after the accident, and that "Soviet troops had sealed off the area where the accident occurred." Gwertzman also noted that the Sverdlovsk matter had come to light "in unusual fashion." On March 14th, the daily report of the Foreign Broadcasts Information Service, a branch of the C.I.A. which monitors and publishes transcripts of foreign broadcasts and reprints articles from the foreign press, had carried two items from *Bild Zeitung*, a Hamburg sensationalist tabloid, that had been published the previous October and February and had reported on explosions in Soviet plants allegedly making bacteriological weapons. The *Times* dispatch said that it was "rare for the Government's foreign broadcasts report to carry material more than two weeks old," and that there was "speculation that the publication of the Bild Zeitung articles was designed to stimulate public discussion as part of the Government's effort to discredit the Soviet Union following its intervention in Afghanistan." That speculation was substantiated by an anonymous "senior intelligence official," who said that the timing was "no accident" and that the announcement was "part of a major effort to rev up public opinion about Soviet activity in the area of chemical and biological warfare."

The Soviet response was swift. The day after the briefing, a statement issued by the Soviet Foreign Ministry denounced the State Department disclosures as "impudent slander" and "the latest invention of American propaganda." Apparently—so David K. Willis reported in the *Christian Science Monitor* on March 28th—Soviet Foreign Ministry officials were "furious" about what they considered public-relations trickery by the Americans. In the lead to his story Willis asked, "Did the United States in effect double-cross the Soviet Union in the way it handled the recent exchange on germ warfare?" Willis reported that on March 17th the United States Ambassador to Moscow, Thomas J. Watson, requested information on the Sverdlovsk matter from the Soviet Foreign Ministry. He received no immediate reply. The next day, the F.B.I.S. press reports were made public. "The Soviets are convinced the U.S. set them up without solid evidence," Willis wrote, and he noted that this may have been because "there is no solid evidence to be found anywhere" to support the charges.

The Soviet Union made its official reply to the American allegations on

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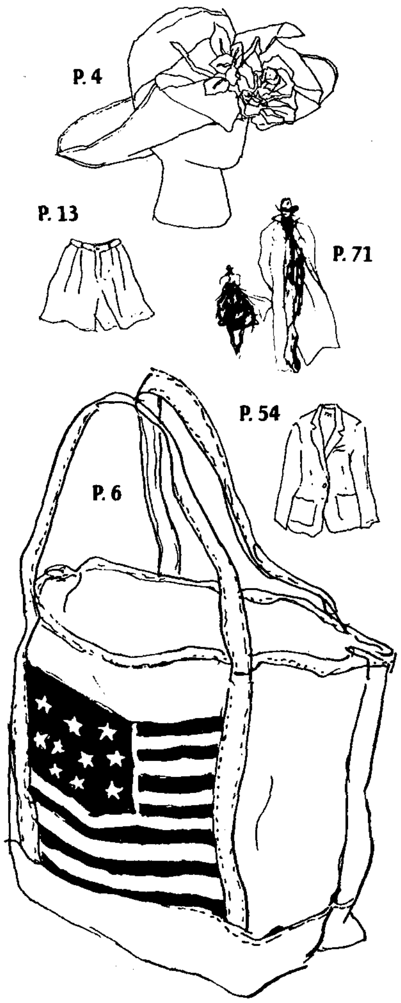

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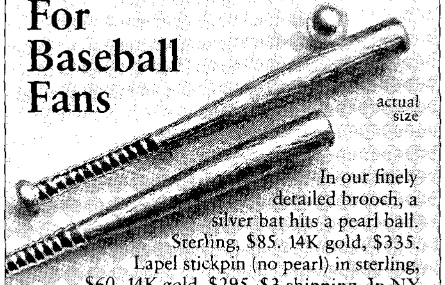

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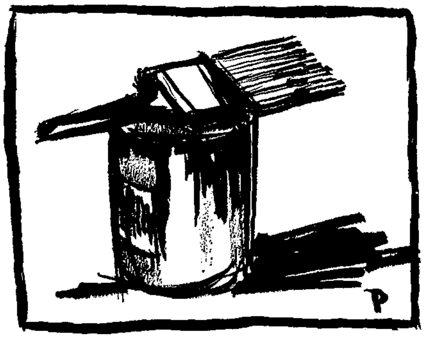
March 20th. As it was later summarized at the State Department for the press, the reply said that an outbreak of anthrax had indeed occurred in Sverdlovsk the preceding April, but that it had been brought about by improper sale and consumption of meat products in the area. On March 24th, the news agency TASS, in its English-language service, elaborated on this position, maintaining that the 1979 outbreak had affected both animals and human beings, and that the human victims had been afflicted by the cutaneous and intestinal forms of the disease, as a result of slaughtering sick animals and consuming their meat "in violation of the norms established by the veterinary control service." The TASS commentary said that several newspapers in Sverdlovsk had warned the inhabitants of the dangers of buying unbranded, uninspected meat in the area, and that the Sverdlovsk region had historically been subject to anthrax epidemics. The commentary denied that the outbreak had any connection with biological weapons, and declared that there was "no justification or foundation whatsoever for the U.S. side to raise the issue."

Little weight was given in the United States press to the Soviet explanations. In a stream of articles dealing with the Sverdlovsk affair, and nearly always based on anonymous sources, ominous interpretations of the episode were well to the fore. On March 21st, the Boston *Globe* ran a story by William Beecher, an experienced journalist, who had formerly worked as a Washington correspondent for the *Times* and had also served as the second-ranking public-relations officer at the Pentagon. The Beecher dispatch was headed "GERM WARFARE: IS THE KREMLIN TEARING UP THE RULES BOOK?" In the article, Beecher referred to reports that Soviet troops had been using poison gas in Afghanistan, and he commented that if the Soviet Union was also manufacturing germ-warfare agents "the implication is staggering." Such activities, Beecher wrote, could, if they were confirmed, undermine confidence in "a wide sweep of arms control efforts with the Russians," and would call for "a searching reappraisal of the defensive plans for Western Europe." He noted that reports from Russian émigrés "have persuasively confirmed rumors of the deaths of hundreds of people in Sverdlovsk following the explosion last spring at what is described as a biological warfare manufacturing plant," and that "American intelligence is convinced that deadly pulmonary anthrax spores were spewed into the atmosphere." Beecher was presumed to be something of an expert. In 1975, clearly drawing on his contacts in the Washington intelligence community, he had written an article for the *Globe* on biological-weapons research in the Soviet Union. The article had reported that the Ford Administration was in possession of "evidence that within recent months the Soviet Union has been constructing or expanding facilities which appear to be biological arms production plants." The available evidence, Beecher wrote, had been photographed; the appearance of the suspect facilities was characterized by "very high incinerator stacks and large cold storage bunkers that could be used for stockpiling the weapons." The sites of these facilities, Beecher had reported, were Zagorsk, Omutninsk, and Sverdlovsk.

The *Times* weighed in several days after the latest Beecher article, with a story headed "NEW REPORTS ON SOVIET ANTHRAX CONVINCE U.S. OF GERM-WAR TIE." The author was Richard Burt, who was then a national-security correspondent for the paper, and who later became the Director of Politico-Military Affairs at the State Department and one of the leading adherents of the government's charges of chemical-weapons use in Southeast Asia. The article quoted nameless officials as asserting that reports about the outbreak of anthrax had recently been received from "sources saying they were witnesses to the incident." Burt went on, "The intelligence reports . . . trace the origins of the outbreak to a military installation near Sverdlovsk and provide medical information that is said to eliminate the possibility that the disease occurred naturally, as Moscow recently stated." A high-ranking intelligence aide, Burt wrote, said that intelligence given to the Administration indicated that many residents of Sverdlovsk had contracted pulmonary anthrax, "a form of the disease that affects the lungs after the anthrax organisms are inhaled," as distinct from "gastric anthrax, a form of the disease that attacks the digestive system." Burt quoted other officials as saying that when the anthrax outbreak was discovered Soviet authorities sealed off a large tract of land outside the installation, that the first casualties were troops camped nearby, and that because the authorities had launched a major effort to cover up the incident it was difficult to estimate how many people had died from the disease. However, the article quoted one government official as saying that it was "pretty certain" that "at least hundreds of people died." Only in the fifth paragraph of his story did Burt offer the caveat that "some American aides, in private, said the Soviet explanation might be accurate." Burt's account was buttressed by an Associated Press dispatch that quoted United States "intelligence sources" in detail on the first casualties: Soviet soldiers were said to have appeared at a local hospital, exhibiting high fever, coughing, and grogginess; their lips and ears had turned blue. The soldiers reportedly died within six hours, and autopsies showed that the lungs of the deceased were filled with fluid—signs that the anthrax had been inhaled.



Throughout the spring of 1980, leaks from the Pentagon and various intelligence branches of the government emphasized the serious implications of the Sverdlovsk affair, particularly for the future of arms control. On April 2nd, a nationally syndicated column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak referred to a "top-secret guideline" drafted the previous month by a National Security Council committee, which informed the President that the Sverdlovsk matter was being raised with Moscow; and the columnists quoted an unnamed arms-control expert as saying that a finding of Soviet guilt in violating the biological-weapons convention "would terrify the arms controllers." The following month, another Evans and Novak column began, "One day recently President Carter received and read a devastating intelligence report that appears to eliminate all lingering doubt that the 1979

Sverdlovsk explosion resulted from germ warfare." The column went on, "In chilling detail, the report states, on the strength of a wide number of intelligence sources, that the 'first casualties were a fairly large number of male reservists at the military installation.' . . . The report says the commander of the military installation committed suicide and that Defense Minister Dmitriy Ustinov made an unannounced inspection two weeks after the explosion."

In June, a subcommittee of the House Committee on Intelligence held both secret and open hearings on the incident. One of the open hearings was marked by the appearance of Mark Popovsky, a Russian émigré who had written several books in the Soviet Union on biology and medicine and was then a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in Washington. Popovsky testified that in February a letter had been smuggled out to him from Moscow containing information obtained from what he identified as underground sources, who reported details of an explosion at a secret biological-research-and-production facility at Military Compound 19, in the southern section of Sverdlovsk, one night in April, 1979. As a result of the explosion, Popovsky's informant wrote, a disease-bearing cloud had spread across the city's southern suburbs. The nature of the disease was not known, the letter continued, but it was thought to be a virulent form of anthrax, and people who had contracted the disease died within a few hours after being hospitalized. The Soviet authorities had declared that nothing was wrong, but they had inoculated many of the people and the livestock in Sverdlovsk. Nevertheless, Popovsky testified, as many as a thousand people in the area died of the disease spread by the cloud.

Following the hearings, the subcommittee issued a report saying that information available to the government indicated that the symptoms displayed by victims in Sverdlovsk were those of the pulmonary form of anthrax, and that, while it was "conceivable" that some people there might have come down with the gastric form, the Soviet government's explanation that the outbreak had resulted from the consumption and handling of tainted meat was "incomplete at best, and at worst a fabrication." The report concluded that the outbreak was "almost certainly the consequence of a man-made strain of the disease," and linked it to "an explosion at a military facility in Sverdlovsk long suspected of housing biological warfare activities."

WHEN the "disturbing" implications of the Sverdlovsk incident were first accorded worldwide publicity, Matthew Meselson, who had not yet turned his attention to the yellow-rain issue, received a call from the C.I.A. asking him if he would act as a consultant to the government on the Sverdlovsk matter; a committee of biologists and chemical- and biological-weapons specialists was being set up to examine the scientific aspects of the reported explosion and anthrax outbreak. It was agreed that Meselson would consult on an independent basis, and Meselson stipulated that he was to be free, to the extent that security regulations permitted, to make public his own observations on the episode.

The consensus on the government's side was that, while some Sverdlovsk residents might have contracted anthrax through eating or handling tainted meat, the case for the principal cause of death being respiratory anthrax via airborne anthrax spores appeared persuasive. Meselson was by no means persuaded, however, and he communicated his doubts on April 24, 1980, at a joint hearing of two subcommittees of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs inquiring into the "strategic implications of chemical and biological warfare." Meselson pointed out to the congressmen that anthrax had been a continuing public-health problem in the Soviet Union. About two million people were inoculated there each year, he said, and he added that he would therefore not be at all surprised if Soviet research institutes, "including military ones," were working on projects concerning anthrax. Work of this nature in military facilities would not in itself constitute a violation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, since the development of vaccines and the limited production of biological agents for that and other defensive purposes was specifically allowed under its terms. As for press reports that hundreds of people had died of anthrax at Sverdlovsk, and that cases continued to appear more than a month after the start of the outbreak, Meselson said that he found

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these two assertions puzzling, since if the outbreak had indeed been caused by airborne spores released by an explosion, "the primary cloud of spores would have passed by and dispersed quickly, like smoke." The incubation period for pulmonary anthrax, he noted, is only a few days, and it is not known to be contagious.

Shortly after the April hearing, Meselson turned his attention to calculations made within the intelligence community which indicated that the weight of the anthrax spores released from the Sverdlovsk facility was far in excess of an amount that could reasonably be permitted under the terms of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The government had estimated, on the basis of the size of the area supposedly contaminated, that the escaped material weighed at least seventy kilograms and perhaps as much as a hundred kilograms, or two hundred and twenty pounds. "I remembered that anthrax is—roughly speaking, and weight for weight—a million times as effective as nerve gas, and one milligram of nerve gas will kill you," Meselson told me, in an interview in 1988. "I decided to make my own calculation of the weight of anthrax spores which would constitute a lethal dose as far as three kilometres downwind from the source. I did my calculation according to the turbulent-atmospheric-diffusion equations that I know how to do, and I concluded that for completely efficient dispersal all you would need would be a gram." If one were to assume that anthrax is a million times as effective as nerve gas, and if one were to accept just the seventy-kilogram figure, the estimated amount of anthrax spores released would represent the lethal equivalent of seventy thousand tons of nerve gas—"an entire major war's worth." Such an amount, Meselson said, would "kill people at a distance of not just a few kilometres but over a vast distance." As it turned out, Meselson was informed, on an unclassified basis, "by people in the government who really know how to do it," that his calculation was correct. Government estimates of the weight of anthrax spores spread by the reported accident were scaled down—first to twenty kilograms and eventually to about ten kilograms. (If the latter figure is correct, then by Meselson's calculation the government still appears to be wildly off the mark.)

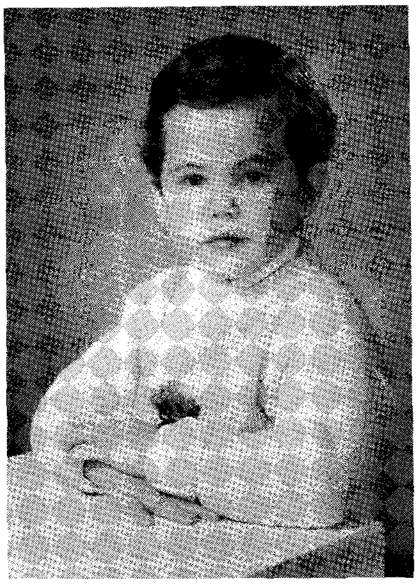
Concerning the prevalence of anthrax in the Soviet Union, Meselson told me that there were a number of papers on the subject by Soviet epidemiologists, including one in a 1974 medical publication recording the occurrence between 1956 and 1968 of thirty-five outbreaks in the Sverdlovsk district alone. Until the 1979 episode, Meselson said, the largest outbreak of fatal cases among human beings to have been reported in Soviet medical literature occurred in 1927, in the city of Yaroslavl, about a hundred and sixty miles northeast of Moscow, when twenty-seven people contracted the intestinal form of the disease, probably from improperly cooked sausage; all of them died. In May, 1980, in the Soviet *Journal of Microbiology, Immunology & Epidemiology*, two Soviet doctors, I. S. Bezdenezhnykh and V. N. Nikiforov, discussed—in guarded and generalized language—the 1979 anthrax outbreak against a background of what they described as its endemic occurrence in the Sverdlovsk area. From 1936 through 1968, they wrote, there had been a hundred and fifty-nine outbreaks of anthrax among livestock in the Sverdlovsk district. In 1979, another outbreak among livestock, "probably caused by fodder," had preceded "sporadic" and "isolated" cases of anthrax among human beings, the source being infected meat "purchased from . . . makeshift markets." However, the report gave no estimate of the number of people affected by the outbreak and made no mention of deaths having occurred.

In his pursuit of further information on the Sverdlovsk episode, Meselson repeatedly suggested to the Soviet government, through intermediaries, that it would help settle matters if an international group of scientists should be allowed to visit Sverdlovsk to discuss the outbreak with Soviet scientists and meet with some of the survivors. He made the same suggestion to various high-level officials in Washington. Both sides expressed interest in the idea, and by midsummer of 1983 arrangements had been proposed for Meselson and two American colleagues to visit Sverdlovsk for two full days of discussions. Then, in early September, Meselson received a letter from the Soviet official he had been in touch with, saying, as Meselson recalls the text, "Dear Professor: In view of recent events I do not think it would be possible at this time to visit the city you wish to visit." The "recent events" were the shooting down of the Korean airliner KAL 007 in Soviet airspace on September 1st and the consequent worsening of Soviet-American relations.

In 1984, the Defense Department's annual report entitled "Soviet Military Power" asserted unequivocally that "the Soviet effort in biological warfare violates the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of 1972," and went on to declare that the Soviet Union had "at least seven biological warfare centers . . . under the strictest military control," one of them at Sverdlovsk. The report noted that the Sverdlovsk accident "may have" infected more than three thousand Soviet citizens, causing "a significant number of casualties and deaths"; that large sections of Sverdlovsk were placed under quarantine and military control; that strenuous efforts were made by Soviet doctors to treat victims; and that "a large-scale effort" had been undertaken to decontaminate the area. In refutation of the Soviet government's claims, the report stated flatly that evidence indicated that "the victims suffered from pulmonary anthrax caused by the inhalation of an anthrax agent, which could only have escaped from the military facility."

NO matter how strained official relations might be, Meselson kept after authorities in the Soviet Union about a fact-finding visit. Eventually, in the summer of 1986, he was invited to Moscow to meet with the Soviet doctors who had investigated the outbreak. At the end of August, he flew to Moscow and spent three days with a group including Dr. Pyotr Burgasov, the deputy health minister who had headed a medical team sent to Sverdlovsk just after the outbreak, and the authors of the May, 1980, *Journal of Microbiology* article—Dr. Vladimir Nikiforov, the head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at the Central Postgraduate Institute, in Moscow, and Dr. Ivan Bezdenezhnykh, the chief epidemiologist of the Russian Federation.

The group began by filling Meselson in on the background of the outbreak. The summer of 1978, they said, had been unusually wet in the Sverdlovsk region, and the result had been not only food shortages but reduced supplies of fodder for farm animals. The latter circumstance was particularly hard on those agricultural workers who raised a few cattle, sheep, or pigs of their own; the authorities for the Sverdlovsk district had therefore decided to make available to private owners of livestock an animal-feed supplement known as bone-flesh powder, which consisted of slaughterhouse waste ground up and mixed with grain and processed under high heat to sterilize any anthrax spores that might be present. Bone-meal feed supplements had been responsible for several serious anthrax outbreaks in various parts of the world, and this is why the precautions were taken. According to the Soviet doctors, the medical team arrived in Sverdlovsk very soon after the outbreak began. At first, the victims had seemed to be suffering from intestinal blockage, but surgery showed that this was not the cause of the illness, and investigators then began to look for other causes. After a while, between five and ten people a day were being admitted to Hospital No. 40, in Sverdlovsk, with symptoms of the disease. In most cases, admission was followed within a very few days by death in great pain. Meselson was interested to see, in tables containing the dates of Hospital No. 40's admissions which were given him by the doctors, that over a period of about six weeks following the start of the outbreak victims had arrived in a more or less continuous stream, and not in the concentrated rush that might have been expected if their illness had been due to mass exposure from a one-time release of spores into the air. The number of anthrax cases during the outbreak, the doctors informed Meselson, totalled ninety-six, of which sixty-four were fatal. Of the ninety-six cases, eleven were of the purely cutaneous form of the disease, and six were of the cutaneous form with accompanying toxemia. The remaining seventy-nine cases, including the fatalities, were of the gastrointestinal form of anthrax. The doctors said they had been able to trace the outbreak to a single twenty-nine-ton lot of contaminated bone-flesh powder from a meat-processing plant in the community of Aramil, about ten miles south of Sverdlovsk; the lot had been sold to private owners of livestock between March 25th and March 29th. According to the doctors, sloppy procedures at the Aramil plant had been responsible for the survival of



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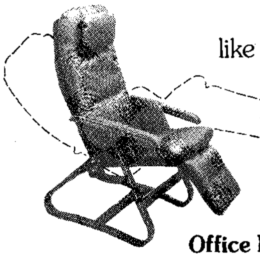

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Bacillus anthracis in the bonemeal mixture. Animals to which the mixture was fed became infected, and after they were slaughtered their meat was sold on the black market, both in the suburbs of Sverdlovsk and in the city itself. A disproportionate number of the gastrointestinal cases were contracted by automobile and truck drivers, perhaps because such people were likely to be knowledgeable about where to get their hands on black-market meat. Some owners who had butchered their infected animals came down with the cutaneous form of anthrax.

The Soviet doctors gave Meselson copies of printed public notices issued during the outbreak by the Sverdlovsk health authorities which warned of the dangers of anthrax and specified public-health precautions. They also gave him clippings of articles from Sverdlovsk newspapers published at the time of the outbreak which contained similar warnings. During his sessions with the doctors, Meselson asked them whether they would come to the United States and lecture before groups of American scientists, journalists, and government officials on the scientific aspects of the Sverdlovsk outbreak. The doctors replied that they were willing, provided they received permission from the Soviet authorities. Before leaving Moscow, Meselson called at the American Embassy and briefed officials there on the details of his discussions, and, once back in Cambridge, he began to make arrangements for the Soviet doctors' visit, allocating money from a grant he had obtained from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to cover most of the costs involved—travel, hotels, qualified interpreters, and so on.

In April, 1988, Dr. Burgasov, Dr. Nikiforov, and Dr. Vladimir Sergiev, who was the director of the Institute of Medical Parasitology and Tropical Medicine, arrived in the United States to present their findings on the Sverdlovsk epidemic and take part in informal discussions on the topic. Sessions were held at the National Academy of Sciences, in Washington; the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, in Baltimore; and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (the official host), in Cambridge. I wasn't at the Washington session, but I did attend the ones in Baltimore and Cambridge. The Soviet scientists repeated and elaborated upon the account Meselson had been given in Moscow in 1986. Their presentation included much clinical detail, and they had brought along color slides showing the effects of anthrax on some of the Sverdlovsk victims; one showed the characteristically ugly lesions of cutaneous anthrax on the hands of a man who had butchered an infected sheep. There were also a number of gruesome color photographs, including one of the autopsied corpse of an intestinal-anthrax victim.

After the presentation at Johns Hopkins, I asked Dr. Burgasov, through an interpreter, when he had learned that something was amiss in Sverdlovsk.

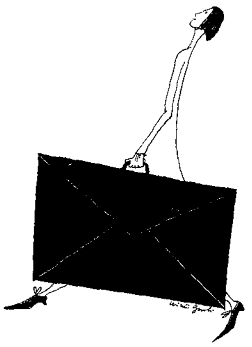
"I first heard about it at ten o'clock on the morning of April 7th, when the U.S.S.R. prosecutor's office called the Ministry of Health, where I was attending a meeting, and I was called out of the meeting," he told me. "I went to the phone and was told that in Sverdlovsk there had been several cases of sudden death from unknown causes within two or three days." The reason he had heard this through the prosecutor's office, Dr. Burgasov said, was that in the Soviet Union incidents of unexplained sudden death involving two or more people were routinely reported to the prosecutor. Dr. Burgasov's first thought was that the cause of the deaths was poisoning—possibly from botulism, which is an extensive public-health problem in the Soviet Union. He immediately booked a flight to Sverdlovsk and asked Dr. Nikiforov, a specialist in botulism—and luckily, as it turned out, a specialist in anthrax as well—to do the same. Dr. Nikiforov told me that when he arrived in Sverdlovsk he went straight to Hospital No. 40, where patients were arriving with high fever, headaches, and vomiting. Many of them, he said, felt agitated, but others were depressed; all were in very great pain. Soon many of them developed tachycardia, with a rapid lowering of blood pressure. In spite of receiving massive doses of antibiotics, most of the patients died, usually within two days of being admitted. The dead were buried in sealed coffins, in special burial grounds outside Sverdlovsk.

Most of the anthrax victims were adult males—a circumstance that jibed neatly with the early reports that the first victims were troops encamped near the biological-weapons facility. But Dr. Sergiev explained this by saying that at a time of acute food shortages whatever meat became available was often reserved for the heads of households. "The males work in heavy industry, mainly," he told me. "They do the heavy work, and they have to eat heavily." One of the few relatively fortunate aspects of the outbreak, he continued, was that only one child—a six-year-old girl—contracted anthrax; although it was of the intestinal form, she made a complete recovery. Dr. Sergiev attributed the absence of anthrax among Sverdlovsk's children to a combination of the father-gets-the-meat custom and the fact that children were regularly served their main meal at schools or day-care centers, where whatever meat they were given had been officially inspected. He assured me, when I questioned him on the matter, that "not a single case" of anthrax occurred among troops stationed in Sverdlovsk during the outbreak, because of similar precautions routinely taken among the military.

I also learned from Dr. Sergiev that one private owner of livestock had thrown the carcass of a dead cow into an abandoned mine shaft outside the city, and that on the instructions of the investigators a man had been lowered into the shaft and had recovered samples of meat from the carcass. When the samples were analyzed, they were found to be contaminated with anthrax bacilli, and the strain was found to match that of bacilli recovered from the bonemeal and from autopsies of the victims. In an attempt to halt the spread of the epidemic, warnings were then put out over the radio and in the local newspapers, and also on posters in workplaces, instructing people not to buy uninspected meat, and since most of the area's farms are south of the city, police checkpoints were set up at southern entrance points to Sverdlovsk to prevent the entry of black-market meat. When people began to hear of sudden illness afflicting their neighbors, many who had been hoarding black-market meat for the May Day holiday simply threw it out on the nearest rubbish dump, where stray dogs ate it. Several of the dogs were caught and destroyed; samples were taken from their carcasses, and these, too, contained anthrax bacilli of the same strain found in the victims and in the contaminated bonemeal from the processing plant.

While the accounts of the Soviet doctors certainly provided a plausible explanation of events in that city in the spring of 1979, there remained questions that needed to be fully answered. Chief among them was what sort of work was carried out in the mysterious military biological facility in Sverdlovsk. On this matter the doctors were unhelpful. When one of the American scientists put the question to Dr. Burgasov, he replied that it should properly be addressed to the Soviet Ministry of Defense. However, the Soviet physicians did point out that an official statement concerning the facility's purpose had been submitted to the World Health Organization, which had been informed that the facility was dedicated to studies in the spread of disease but housed no pathogens. Attempts on my part to clarify the matter during my interviews with the visitors got me nowhere.

Among the other questions on my mind was why it had taken so long for the Soviet Union to be forthcoming about the cause of the epidemic. According to a Washington *Post* report of the session at the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Burgasov had conceded that "questions of censorship" arose following the outbreak and "excluded the possibility of publication" of scientific details. In Cambridge, I took up this topic with Dr. Sergiev. To begin with, I said, I had been struck by the fact that the 1980 *Journal of Microbiology* article on the Sverdlovsk outbreak made no mention of human fatalities. In the United States, I said, one would expect to see, under similar circumstances, plainly worded warnings from health authorities, along with explanations of the probable cause of the outbreak and information on its extent. Dr. Sergiev replied that in the Soviet Union during the period in which the Sverdlovsk episode occurred "it was ordinary procedure that information about outbreaks as a cause of human illnesses was not made public." For example, if a flu outbreak occurred in a particular city, he told me, "usually somebody appears on TV and says something like, 'Generally speaking, during the late autumn and the beginning of winter, as a rule, there is an enlargement of the number of acute respiratory diseases' "—here he laughed—"and everybody in the population hearing that understands that it's a flu epidemic." Soviet citizens, he said, were used to reading not just between the lines but "even between the between-the-lines." As for the military control that the United States government said had been imposed on Sverdlovsk during the outbreak, Dr. Sergiev suggested that the origins of this report may well have been the roadblocks that local police had set up to keep uninspected meat from being brought in for sale on the black market. And Dr. Burgasov told me that in some areas of the city and its outskirts where the incidence of anthrax had been particularly heavy the authorities had conducted house-to-house searches for tainted meat.



To my question of what—after the years of delay, and the doubts raised in the West—had finally brought Soviet doctors to the United States to explain the episode, Dr. Sergiev replied, "You not only invite us but you pay for the visit. Because, as I understand it, nobody in the Soviet Union would pay for it—you see, 'What for?' "

In a transatlantic telephone conversation I had in early 1988 with the Soviet biologist Zhores Medvedev, who was living in London, he told me that the claims that Sverdlovsk had been "sealed off" to prevent news of the epidemic from seeping to the outside didn't make sense to anyone familiar with the geography of the area. He pointed out that Sverdlovsk is the most important rail center in the Urals, with a large volume of passenger traffic constantly moving in and out of the city. Dr. Medvedev is knowledgeable on the subject of Soviet disasters. In a book entitled "Nuclear Disaster in the Urals," which was published in this country in 1979, he told of the consequences of a huge explosion that had occurred in 1957 at a nuclear-waste-disposal site inside a military-production complex in the Urals. The explosion spread radioactive material across an area about four hundred square miles in size. Medvedev reported that panics had occurred in cities within the area. He noted that a Soviet émigré, on a British television documentary, said that a doctor in Sverdlovsk reported that hospitals in the area were "crammed" with patients suffering from radiation sickness; most of these patients were said to have died. One might reasonably expect that if the kind of incident alleged by the American government had occurred at the biological facility at Sverdlovsk, panic on the order of that reported following the 1957 explosion would have very likely broken out among Sverdlovsk residents. But there are no reports of any such panic occurring during the 1979 anthrax outbreak in Sverdlovsk. An American scientist named Donald Ellis was working at the Institute of Chemistry and Physics in Sverdlovsk in April and May of that year; he later told Meselson that he was not aware that anything untoward had happened until the State Department announcement, well after he returned home.

David Satter, a correspondent for the *Financial Times* of London, travelled through the Urals by train in the spring of 1980. He wrote that people he encountered on the journey provided "the first independent support for the official Soviet explanation that the outbreak occurred because of contaminated meat products." Satter reported that "passengers I met . . . and people from Shadrinsk, a city of 80,000, who have relations in Sverdlovsk, have told me that the disease was spread through the sale of meat to city dwellers by villagers from the surrounding countryside." One traveller remarked to Satter that there had been few deaths and "no quarantine" of the city. Satter's fellow-passengers gave him other apparently significant details as well: leaflets appeared in Sverdlovsk warning people not to buy uninspected meat, and warnings against anthrax contamination were broadcast on the radio and published in the press.

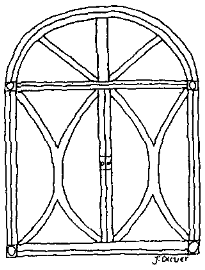
If the authorities in Moscow had in fact engineered a coverup, it seems clear that it would have required the coöperation not only of senior military officers and government epidemiologists but of the K.G.B. and high officials of the provincial Party apparatus. As it happened, the first secretary of the Sverdlovsk provincial Party organization at the time of the outbreak was Boris Yeltsin, the maverick who later quit the Communist Party and is now the president of the Russian Federation and a prominent rival of Mikhail Gorbachev. Yeltsin is a man who fought conservative control of the Party for years; in his autobiography, "Against the Grain," he remarks that while he was in office in Sverdlovsk he developed "reasonably good relations" with the provincial directorate of the K.G.B.; nevertheless, he seems to be a poor candidate for the role of prime conspirator in a coverup of a biological-weapons-plant accident in the city, in 1979 or at any other time. In September of 1989, Yeltsin visited the United States on a lecture tour, and I went down to Philadelphia one day to see if I could have a few words with him, between speeches and press conferences, about the Sverdlovsk episode. Eventually—just before he boarded a plane at the Philadelphia airport for a flight to Minneapolis—I caught up with him and told him, through his interpreter, of the attempts I had been making to get at the facts of the Sverdlovsk outbreak. In a brief exchange, Yeltsin assured me in no uncertain terms that the 1979 anthrax outbreak in Sverdlovsk, in which "about fifty people" died, was "all natural," and there was "no connection whatever with biological weapons."

THE advent of the Soviet doctors left the government's hard-liners unconverted. Shortly after the presentation at the National Academy of Sciences, Gary Crocker was quoted in the Washington *Post* as commenting, "What we have is an elaboration of their [the Soviets'] original position . . . which does not fit with the evidence and facts we have collected on the issue." And there is indeed room for a good deal of skepticism. Although the Soviet doctors assured their American hosts that they were willing to go back to Sverdlovsk with an American team to interview survivors and to conduct further research, no such trip has taken place. The data that has been reviewed in the West is considered somewhat less than conclusive, and recent reports in the Soviet press have questioned the official version of the epidemic, alleging, for example, that the chief veterinary inspector for the Sverdlovsk region had conducted his own investigation and "did not find any source of the disease or cause of the outbreak." One pathologist who made a number of post-mortem examinations of anthrax victims at Hospital No. 40 was reported to be convinced that the source of infection in the bodies she had examined was "mainly aerogenic"—that is, of airborne origin. Perhaps most important—as Meselson himself has emphasized—no reliable information has become available in the West on the kind of work the Soviets were doing in the Sverdlovsk military-research facility. Although they did file a statement with WHO declaring that the facility did not deal with dangerously toxic materials, they have failed to specify the precise nature of the research being conducted there—now or at the time of the 1979 anthrax epidemic.

In general, however, the official coverup of disasters—which have been endemic in the Soviet Union—has given way, in the post–Cold War atmosphere, to a welcome readiness to admit past errors and programs of public deception, as the recent articles on Sverdlovsk themselves demonstrate. Some of the essential facts concerning the 1957 nuclear-waste disaster which were set forth by Zhores Medvedev have been publicly confirmed in a hearing by two committees of the Supreme Soviet. The circumstances surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear-power-plant disaster of 1986—along with the failure of the Soviet bureaucratic system which brought it about, and the environmental and public-health consequences that followed it—have been the subject of considerable critical discussion in the Soviet press. The Soviets have also opened up—somewhat, at least—on the traditionally taboo subject of chemical-weapons production. This opening-up process led to the signing, at the summit meeting in Washington last June, of an agreement by Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev that provides, among other things, for the progressive destruction of the greater part of existing chemical-weapons stockpiles held by the two superpowers. One important benefit resulting from this agreement has been the cancellation of the United States binary-weapons program.

For many years, the Soviet Union

had refused to admit—or, for that matter, to deny—that it possessed any chemical weapons at all. The first breakthrough came in March of 1987, at the disarmament conference in Geneva, when the chief Soviet negotiator, in discussing terms for a proposed international convention, declared that chemical weapons would “be destroyed by all states possessing such weapons, including both the Soviet Union and the United States.” Then, in December of that year, the Soviet Foreign Ministry, referring scornfully to “absolutely fantastic ‘data’ ” being put out by American spokesmen on chemical-weapons stocks in the U.S.S.R., asserted that Soviet stocks of chemical weapons “do not exceed fifty thousand tons in terms of poisoning substances,” and it maintained that, “according to Soviet expert estimates, this corresponds to the chemical-weapons stocks of the United States.” The statement further noted that the Soviets had never used such weapons, or allowed them to be moved beyond Soviet borders, and that the recent resumption of chemical-weapons production by the United States was “nothing short of an attempt to torpedo the process of chemical disarmament.”



In a speech at the Foreign Ministry in July of 1988, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze suggested that the creation of a Western strategic front in Europe could have been avoided “if at the time we had correctly assessed our own national interests.” He then posed this question: “What were we following over the last fifteen years in working to establish a ‘chemical rampart’? This cost colossal amounts of money and diverted large production capacities, manpower, and resources.” In a written response to a series of questions in *Pravda* last June, Shevardnadze criticized the Soviet military for their lack of candor concerning the true cost to the Soviet people of past chemical-weapons policies. “Why, for example, the silence on the part of those who supposedly bolstered the country’s securities by putting chemical weapons on the production line and kept them in production after everyone else in the world had stopped making them?” he asked, and he went on to complain, “Now we must either develop a technology for destroying those weapons and spend at least three billion rubles in the process, or these toxic materials will turn whole regions into wastelands.”

What this declared diversion of so much money and production capacity may have amounted to is hard to determine, and will undoubtedly take considerable time to sort out in the course of the mutual on-site inspections provided for in the mid-1990 summit agreement. Western estimates of the size of Soviet chemical-weapons stockpiles have varied enormously. While the United States Defense and State Departments have been wary of issuing official estimates, they have not hesitated to provide reporters and columnists with deep-background leaks concerning Soviet chemical-weapons capabilities. The resulting articles have tended to cite such sources as “Western specialists,” “Western experts,” and “military experts.” Typical of the genre is a Moscow dispatch by Serge Schmemann that appeared in the New York *Times* on April 6, 1984, and noted that “Western experts” said that the Soviet Union had at least three hundred thousand tons of chemical weapons. Within the next six weeks, this particular estimate was raised by fifty thousand tons in a U.P.I. report and was converted, in the Washington *Times*, into an estimate of the amount of nerve gas alone (“NATO estimates that the Soviet Union has some 300,000 tons of nerve gas”). In October, 1987, a Reuters dispatch put the informed American estimate of chemical weapons possessed by the Soviets at “500,000 to 600,000 tons.” Other press reports put Western estimates of the Soviet chemical arsenal as high as seven hundred thousand tons. In the course of passing such figures along, reporters paid little or no attention to qualifications without which such estimates were almost meaningless—for example, whether the tonnage figure referred to the total weight of chemical munitions or to the payload alone, and what the precise types and the relative lethalities of the weapons were. According to an article in the Washington *Post* on November 9, 1989, the Defense Intelligence Agency, in contributing to an intelligence-community review preparatory to upcoming American on-site inspections of some So-

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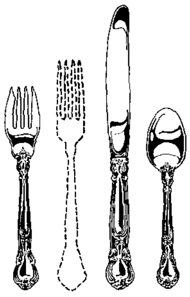

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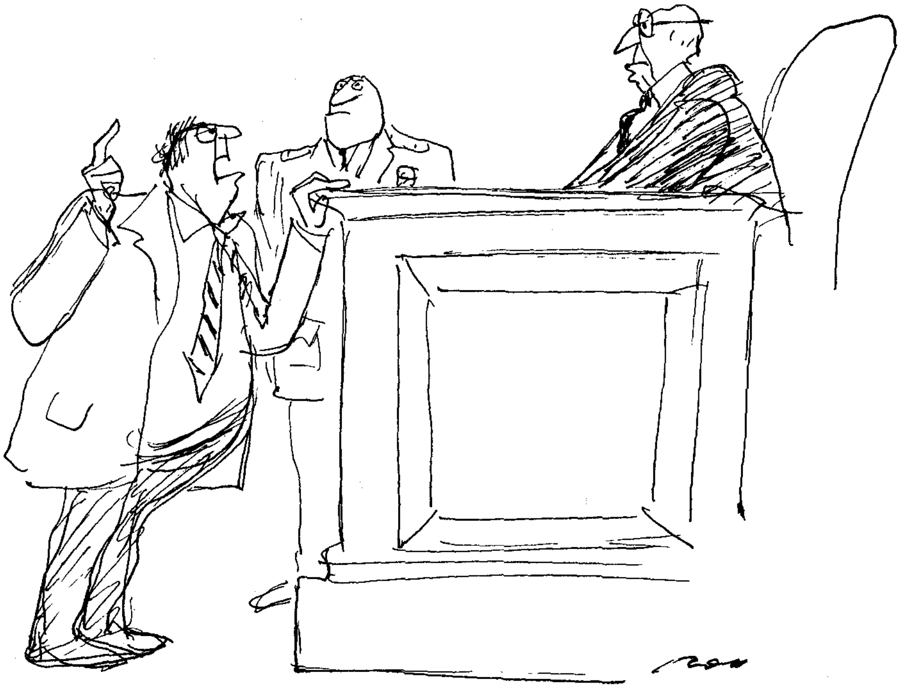

"Give me liberty or give me a drink!"

viet chemical-weapons production and storage facilities, dramatically revised downward its previous estimates of the Soviet stockpile, which it now reckoned at about seventy-five thousand tons. The same article reported that the C.I.A., in "secret" documents, gave an estimate even lower than the D.I.A.'s.

It is difficult to reconcile the lowered government estimates with the references that Shevardnadze, in *Pravda* and in his Foreign Ministry speech, made to an excessive and hugely wasteful Soviet chemical-arms-production program carried on while "everyone else" had abandoned such activities. Nor, for that matter, do Shevardnadze's statements appear to fit in well with some of Meselson's statements to me in 1981 dismissing the Reagan Administration's concern about a Soviet chemical-arms buildup. However, Meselson has recently modified his assessment of the probable rate of past Soviet chemical-weapons production. Not long after the summit agreement in Washington, he gave me some background to the buildup on both sides: "After the Second World War, the United States destroyed a great deal of chemical munitions—mainly mustard gas—and, as far as I know, so did the Soviets. But in the nineteen-fifties and middle sixties we built up a very big stockpile of nerve agents. The Soviet buildup was very rapid and followed ours. Then *we* came up with binary weapons. What still isn't clear is to what extent we confidently knew what the Soviets had been doing. But it certainly was widely believed in Washington that they were engaging in this kind of buildup. Even so, we delayed in the development of our own chemical program—because of technical difficulties with testing the binaries, and also because of our repugnance about chemical weapons in general. But then the yellow-rain issue became important. And now it turns out that we and the Soviets have both thrown away a lot of money—and that both of us are going to have to spend a lot more, just to get rid of the stuff."

What is clear is that in the postwar era each of the governments of the great powers was behaving permissively, at the very least, toward the creation of a runaway program of chemical-weapons development. In this country, the development was fuelled in part by official charges of Soviet or Soviet-assisted chemical-weapons attacks in Southeast Asia and imputations of Soviet biological-weapons activities in Sverdlovsk. Not only did these allegations lead almost to the point of confrontation with the Soviets in the field of arms control and disarmament but they also proved a distraction for which this country, not to mention the rest of the world, may already be paying a high price. While the Reagan Administration was heavily promoting charges concerning the supposed lethality of yellow-rain deposits, real chemical warfare was taking place—with very little objection from the United States or the international community—in the Iran-Iraq War, with the employment by the Iraqis of mustard gas and nerve gas against Iranian troops, and, later, against members of their own Kurdish minority. In 1982, the United States government removed Iraq from a State Department list of countries supporting terrorism, thereby making it eligible to buy military equipment from the United States. Two years later, the Administration did sharply protest Iraq's use of poison gas, and even placed a ban on the export to both Iraq and Iran of certain materials likely to be used for chemical weapons. But it made no attempt to press for meaningful international sanctions against Iraq. After Iraqi forces wiped out five thousand Iraqi Kurds at Halabja with poison gas, in March of 1988, the Reagan Administration, while denouncing this action, again failed to call for international measures to bring Iraq to account—even after a United Nations investigating committee confirmed the facts of the massacre in horrifying detail. The Administration was too preoccupied with its tilt toward Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War.

In making this tilt, the United States was, of course, by no means alone. Chemical companies in West Germany, France, Belgium, and Italy are reliably reported to have supplied Iraq, during the nineteen-eighties, with precursor materials for the manufacture of chemical weapons. According to Gary Thatcher and Timothy Aeppel, in a special section of the *Christian Science Monitor* in December, 1988, Iraq obtained five hundred metric tons of thiodiglycol, a chemical with a variety of uses which is also a mustard-gas precursor, from a wholly owned Belgian subsidiary of Phillips Petroleum. Because one ton of thiodiglycol is required for the manufacture of one ton of mustard gas, the amount of mustard gas that the Iraqis may have manufactured from the Belgian shipment is five hundred metric tons. (Ironically, given its past record in supplying defoliants for the Vietnam War, the American chemical industry does not appear to have been deeply involved in the sort of covert trafficking in materials for the construction or supply of chemical-arms factories in Iraq and Libya which were carried out by West European chemical companies. The reasons for this restraint include the existence of federal controls prohibiting the export of strategic materials, and—perhaps even more important—the reluctance of the big American chemical companies to subject themselves yet again to hostile campaigns by peace groups, environmental groups, and just plain critical citizens.)

In January of 1989, at an international Conference on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which was held at the behest of President Reagan and under the auspices of the French government, in Paris, I interviewed Nikita Smidovitch, a Soviet chemical-weapons specialist who is one of the youngish, new-style diplomats of Gorbachev's restructured Foreign Ministry. Though he said nothing about any Soviet role in supplying chemical weapons to Saddam Hussein, he told me that during the Iran-Iraq War the Soviet Union did supply the means used to deliver such weapons. "These were Russian jet fighters, MIGs, that would drop chemical bombs on the heads of Iranian soldiers and on people in Halabja," he said, and he went on to declare that there was "almost a joint coöperation between East and West to use this weapon because the only thing they wanted was to preserve Saddam Hussein's regime," and also because, in the case of France, billions of dollars had been lent to Iraq, and the French wanted the loan repaid. According to a report in the *Times* last September 21st, an article appearing the previous day in *Le Nouvel Observateur* accused a number of French companies of exporting precursor chemicals and machinery for the manufacture of chemical weapons to Iraq beginning in 1986. The magazine also reported that satellite images suggest that much of the exported material ended up in a chemical-weapons complex at Samarra. (This complex was reported to have been heavily bombed by allied aircraft in late January and early February.) At the Paris conference, the United States and France, in their pursuit of consensus, opposed efforts to censure Iraq for its wartime use of poison gas. Instead, they settled on a general statement that condemned chemical warfare in principle. Kurds had hoped to demonstrate outside the UNESCO building in Paris, where the conference was being held, but they were kept well away by police. They were allowed to present a petition of grievance on behalf of the victims at Halabja to a subordinate at the Paris headquarters of the French Socialist Party, and then they were sent packing—certainly without reaching the head of the French Socialist Party, President François Mitterrand.

How Western temporizing helped lower the threshold of restraint, allowing Iraq to escalate its use of chemical weapons, has been spelled out in a declassified Israeli Defence Ministry summary I recently obtained through the Israeli consulate-general in New York. According to the summary, "there were several stages in the use of CW in the war against Iran: first, only in defense of the front, then against the rear areas of offensive Iranian operations, then in an offensive mode against defensive Iranian formations and ultimately against civilian targets." As a result, "control and operational decisions regarding their use were relaxed, from the highest political level, i.e., President Saddam Hussein, down to corps and division commanders." Control of such operational decisions has apparently stayed "relaxed": the London *Sunday Times* of February 3rd reports that there is evidence that Iraqi "front-line commanders" have been authorized to use chemical agents at their own discretion. The article also notes that "Iraqi forces may have 100,000 artillery shells filled with chemicals" in their arsenals. As for the possible reasons behind the American temporizing—besides our desire to put the defeat of Iran ahead of other objectives in the Iran-Iraq War—W. Seth Carus, a fellow of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, has described some policymakers in the State Department as having been "unwilling to stick their necks out" on the Iran-Iraq chemical-weapons issue in the latter part of the eighties "because they felt that they had got burned on the yellow-rain thing" and were therefore reluctant to come out with new and potentially controversial charges concerning chemical-weapons attacks.

IN the history of chemical weapons, international attention paid to them has been subject to very wide swings, with public reaction alternating between long periods of seemingly near-

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total indifference—or perhaps of aversion to contemplating such horrors—and the onset of sudden panic and cries of outrage. Generally speaking, the more distant the places where chemical attacks have taken place, and the more obscure the real or potential victims, such as those remote and (to use a term employed seventy years ago by Winston Churchill when he was the British Secretary of State for War) “uncivilised” tribes that British authorities wanted to keep under control, the less the public was given to know. Indeed, for many years the use of chemical weapons seems to have been one of the dirty secrets of rule by the colonial powers. Now the genie is out of the bottle. The use of chemical weapons spread, after the Second World War, to Third World countries, some of whose inhabitants had at an earlier period been themselves subject to such attacks. Until fairly recently, most of these uses were kept as quiet as before, both by the new users in the Third World and by the great powers. One example is the poison-gas campaign waged by the Egyptian military between 1963 and 1967 against Royalist supporters in Yemen. In a 1968 book, “Yemen: the Unknown War,” the journalist Dana Adams Schmidt described several gas attacks in Yemen and gave detailed accounts of the agonies that had been suffered by the victims. He noted that when Duncan Sandys, a former Secretary of State for the Colonies, called on the British government to raise the Yemen matter with the United Nations, British Foreign Secretary George Brown responded, “I think the chances of getting any government to attack the U.A.R. in the United Nations for its use of poison gas in the Yemen are nil.” A decade and a half later, the United States government, in its charges of chemical-warfare attacks being waged in Southeast Asia, made an attempt at altering this habit of inaction on chemical warfare in remote places. But, as Meselson has been at pains to demonstrate, the government’s yellow-rain allegations were fatally flawed—and relentlessly promoted, in the same period when Washington failed to press for prompt and effective international sanctions against the Iraqi use of poison gas against Iranian forces and Iraqi Kurds.

Meselson’s views on the United States government’s role in the yellow-rain affair and its consequences have become, if anything, increasingly harsh with time. In a telephone conversation I had with him last November, he described the government’s efforts in assembling and promulgating the charges of toxin warfare as a “disgraceful episode” and “a slap in the face to the use of science in the service of national security.” Apparently, an important part of the scientific community is in general agreement with this assessment. In February of last year, the American Association for the Advancement of Science presented Meselson with the 1990 Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award. The accompanying citation referred to his “persistent questioning—in the face of hostile criticism—of claims that the Soviet Union was supporting the use of a yellow, rain-like chemical warfare agent in Southeast Asia,” and also praised his “comprehensive study” of the military use of herbicides in Vietnam and his role in “influencing the United States government to renounce biological warfare.”

Meselson remarked in the same interview that though it has been “very difficult” for anyone to obtain detailed information from the Soviets concerning the Sverdlovsk episode, he continues to be convinced that the anthrax outbreak there was of natural origin. He stressed, however, that “even today I am concerned about what that [military research] facility might have been doing ten years ago,” and that he was “still awaiting Soviet action to clarify that.”

As negotiations in Geneva continue toward obtaining an international convention to ban the possession of chemical weapons, it seems reasonable to hope that before such negotiations come to fruition the two great powers will be required to come clean, so to speak, about the facts involved in the yellow-rain and the Sverdlovsk episodes, and about the sequence of events and political activities surrounding them—including full details of the scientific and other evidence that now appears to have been systematically withheld from independent scientists and the public by both governments.

—Thomas Whiteside

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

MUSICAL EVENTS

A Cajolery of Fiddlers

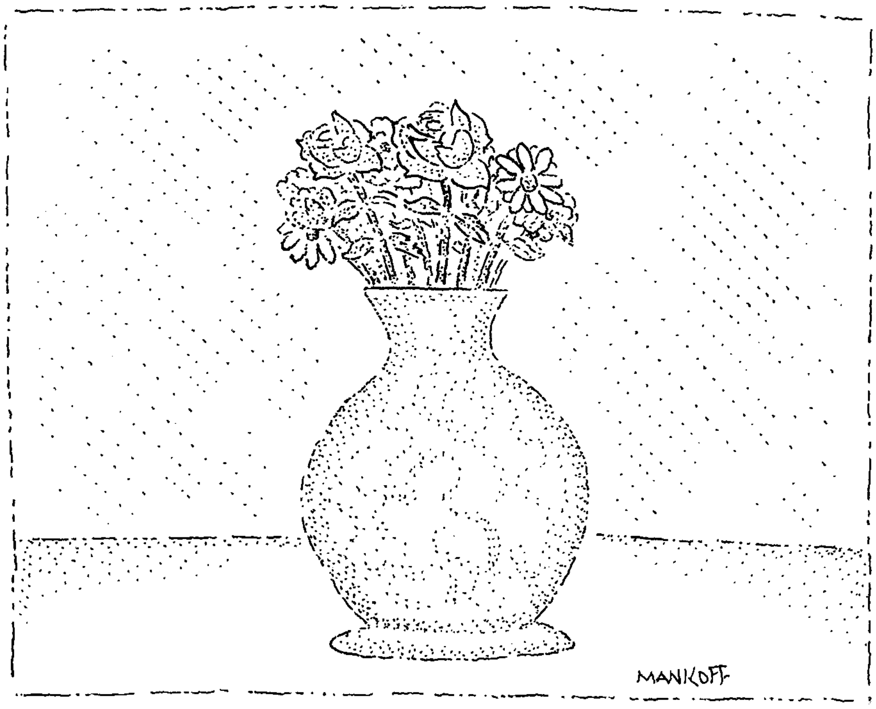
THE story of music-making in the Nazi prison town of Theresienstadt (or Terezín) is chilling and inspiring. It is told in Joža Karas's "Music in Terezín" (Beaufort). The best-known Theresienstadt compositions are Viktor Ullmann's grim but kindly opera "The Emperor of Atlantis," which has been staged in Brooklyn, and Hans Krása's children's opera "Brundibár," which was composed in 1938 but was revised, for local forces, in Theresienstadt and was performed there again and again, with a changing children's chorus as members of it were dispatched to the killing chambers of Auschwitz. A disk of Theresienstadt chamber music is due next month on the Channel Classics Studio label: works by Ullmann (who was killed in Auschwitz in 1944) and Gideon Klein are played by the Hawthorne String Quartet (members of the Boston Symphony) and the pianist Virginia Eskin.

Pavel Haas's Study for String Orchestra was composed in Theresienstadt in 1943 and was played there the following year, by a string ensemble that Karel Ančerl had formed. A month after the performance, the composer and most of the players were sent to Auschwitz. Ančerl survived; after the war, he returned to Theresienstadt and there recovered the music of the Study (all but the double-bass part, which has been reconstructed). The Boston Symphony, conducted by Seiji Ozawa, introduced the Study to New York at a Carnegie Hall concert last month. Haas, who was born in Brno in 1899, studied with Janáček. There is a Janáček quality in the energetic moto-perpetuo figure at the start of the Study and in the sharp, quirky cut of the main theme, which is set above it in cross-rhythm, 3/4 against 6/8. There follow a fugato; a brief scherzo; a slow episode, pierced by a "tragic fate" figure, in which the fugue subject appears *molto espressivo;* and a resolute, busy finale. In a span of eight minutes, a great deal happens; the arresting, lively theme burns brightly through rhythmic, pitch-contour, and contrapuntal metamorphoses and oppositions. An excellent piece of composition, by any standards.

HAAS's Study was followed by the First Violin Concerto, Opus 14, of Wieniawski, which is a work of talented, exuberant youthfulness. The violinist-composer was eighteen when, in 1853, he composed it and played it in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, establishing his reputation. (How many eighteen-year-old composers today write and prominently play concertos that are taken up through the world, pieces that go on being played for a century and more?) Midori, the Carnegie soloist, is not much older than Wieniawski was when he composed it. Though merely a performer—not, like most of the nineteenth-century virtuosi, a composer as well—she gave a beautiful account of the work. She was poetic, capricious, exquisite. She played the concerto almost as if she had written it. Her timbres were liquid and lovely, and she used vibrato not as a mechanical constant but as a variable, subtle adornment.

There was more Wieniawski—the pretty Scherzo-Tarantelle, Opus 16—at Joseph Silverstein's recital in the Metropolitan Museum the next day. The program closed with three elegant trifles offered as homage to Heifetz on the ninetieth anniversary of his birth: Paganini's Moto Perpetuo, Elgar's "La Capricieuse," and the Wieniawski. Jonathan Feldman accompanied. Mr. Silverstein, who was once the youngest member of the Boston Symphony, and for twenty-two years its concertmaster, is perhaps best known today as a conductor; he remains a fiddler whose blend of gravity and grace is distinctive and pleasing. The big work on his program, Bach's D-minor Partita, received an intent, lucid, eloquent performance. Before it, there was Schubert's voluble, attractive Rondeau Brillant—one of two pieces that Schubert composed for the young Bohemian fiddler Josef Slavík, whom Chopin so much admired. ("He played like another Paganini, but a rejuvenated Paganini, sometimes surpassing the original. . . . He strikes his hearers dumb, he makes people weep; more, he makes tigers weep.") John Harbison's Four Songs of Solitude (1985), for unaccompanied violin, received their New York première. They are fine-grained lyrical musings, inventive and shapely.

Two days later, the Songs of Solitude had their New York deuxième, at an afternoon Carnegie Hall recital given by Michelle Makarski, the 1989 winner of the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition. Brent McMunn was her accompa-



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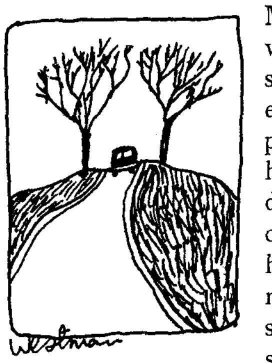
nist. The program presented American music framed by two French sonatas. It began with Poulenc's Violin Sonata, which was inspired by the death of García Lorca, is dedicated to Ginette Neveu, and is one of Poulenc's least *reticent* compositions—openly passionate, at times Tchaikovskian. After the Harbison, there was a new Violin Sonata by Anthony Davis—a Carnegie Hall centenary commission—which I thought rather dry and schematic, except at the romantic start of the slow movement. Stephen Hartke's "Oh Them Rats Is Mean in My Kitchen," that lively, resourceful suite for two violins, had its New York première; the other violin was played by Ronald Copes. Then there was Fauré's First Violin Sonata, his first masterpiece. Songs of Solitude had been the only piece that Mr. Silverstein played from a score. It was the only piece that Miss Makarski did not play from a score, and it was the high point of the recital. Where Mr. Silverstein presented the songs with a fine appreciation of their merit, Miss Makarski seemed herself to become the singer, uttering the lines almost as if she were composing them. Here—only here—she showed a personality and temperament able to fill the enormous hall. Nothing else was so *freely communicative*. She was able, intelligent, sensitive, but the Poulenc needed more fire, and the Fauré lacked rapture.



That evening, the other work that Schubert composed for Slavík, the C-major Fantasy, was played by Joshua Bell, violin, and Stephen Hough, piano, at an Alice Tully Hall recital. Like the Rondeau Brillant, the Fantasy is attractive and voluble. Not being a rondo, it is less repetitious, but some of the passages are empty. The two works are generally (and justly, in the light of Schubert's other achievements) somewhat despised but have their wonderful moments. There were four works on the program. The first, Brahms's A-major Sonata, received a smooth—rather too smooth—performance. The Schubert came next. Then Arvo Pärt's Fratres II—solemn, "timeless," repetitive music, with carefully planned sonorities, that can seem shining and impressive (old, deep chant is mingled with fervent personal prayer), rather dull, or both at once. Finally, Grieg's Third Violin Sonata. By chance, I had that morning been reading Alexandra Orlova's new "Tchaikovsky: A Self-Portrait" (Oxford). In 1887, Tchaikovsky mulls for a page over his inability to love Brahms's music:

> From our Russian point of view Brahms has no melodic invention at all . . . hardly have you heard a hint of a recognizable melodic phrase than it has already fallen into a whirlpool of insignificant harmonic sequences and modulations. . . . His style is always lofty. . . . It is all very serious, very noble, and, seemingly, even original—but despite all this it lacks the most important thing: beauty! That is my response to Brahms's compositions.

Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Grieg were together in Leipzig. Tchaikovsky had been "on the booze with Brahms" and declared him to be "very nice, and not at all proud," but it was Grieg whom he found "really charming." He heard Brodsky play the Third Violin Sonata. The page about Brahms is followed by one about Grieg:

> Perhaps Grieg has much less mastery than Brahms, the sphere of his music is less elevated . . . but on the other hand he is closer to us. . . . *What delight, immediacy,* and richness of musical invention does he give us! How much warmth and passion there is in his singing phrases, what pulsating life in his harmony, how much originality and delightful individuality in his witty, piquant modulations, and in the rhythm, like everything else, there is always something interesting, new, and distinctive.

I enjoyed the Bell-Hough account of the Grieg sonata. Mr. Bell, like Mr. Silverstein, studied with Josef Gingold. To some extent he is a composer as well as a fiddler: a program note told us that he has written his own cadenza for the Brahms concerto. In another way, too, he seemed in tune with the nineteenth-century compositions that bulk large in a successful twentieth-century violinist's repertory. Midori in the Wieniawski concerto and Mr. Silverstein even in Elgar's "La Capricieuse" shunned portamento, spurned that expressive sliding from note to note which well within living memory (and amply documented on disk) formed an important part of a violinist's art. In this magazine recently, Mr. Gingold recalled the magic of Ysaÿe's "plaintive downward slides" in a passage of Vieuxtemps's Fifth Concerto (" 'Every time I change positions here, there is a tear in my playing,' Ysaÿe told me") and was quoted as saying to a pupil, about the second subject of Paganini's D-major Concerto, "And here there's a little bit of a sigh: don't be afraid to slide—it gives the violin a wonderful chance to sing." (Back in 1756, Leopold Mozart, in his treatise on violin playing, wrote, "The human voice glides quite easily from one note to another. . . . And who is not aware that singing is at all times the aim of every instrumentalist. . . . You must therefore take pains where the Cantilena of the piece demands no break . . . to play many notes in one stroke, and in such fashion that the notes which belong together shall run into each other.") When Brahms and Elgar are claimed by the early-music movement, full-blooded, unabashed portamento will no doubt return. Meanwhile, "clean" playing is in fashion. Mr. Bell, alone of the violinists here reviewed, occasionally warmed his melodies with a welcome touch—though just a touch—of expressive portamento. Until he launched into his encores, he played with the music propped on a stand beside him, but, unlike Miss Makarski, he did not keep his eyes glued to it or sound *scorebound*.

The previous day in Tully, the Ukrainian violinist Oleh Krysa, who now lives in New York, gave a recital. I missed the first half—two Beethoven sonatas, with Mykola Suk as the pianist—but enjoyed the second. Mr. Krysa, who teaches at the Manhattan School, and Naoko Tanaka, who teaches in the Juilliard pre-college division, joined with eight of their pupils in a serial performance of Berio's Two-Violin Duets. Like Bartók's "Mikrokosmos," the duets—twenty-eight of the thirty-four were played—are at once instruction pieces and carefully worked miniatures well worth public performance. They vary in length and in difficulty, and progressively introduce young performers to the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms of the twentieth century. Each bears a dedication and is a "portrait"; Bartók, Stravinsky, Mauricio Kagel, Vinko Globokar, and Edoardo Sanguineti are among the friends pictured within. The student players, coming forward two by two in various combinations, ranged from tots to adolescents; they were true in intonation, poised, and confident. Mr. Krysa, a violinist of sterling taste and tone, crowned the cycle with an exhilarating performance of Berio's Sequenza VIII. He followed it with the first performance of Virko Baley's "Sonant I, '. . . figments.' " This proved more arresting for its exploration of technical device than for any great musical content. The first movement, "Chorale (Parastas)," is a three-part chorale, based on a Ukrainian chant, in which two lines sound from the violin while the player sings or whistles the third line. The second movement, "Kolomyika, a Dance," calls for some dancing, stamping, grunting, and spluttering from the player to accompany an animated solo. In the third, "Passacaglia," a "heavenly choir" (the student violinists, four to one side of the platform, four in the balcony) provided a background against which the soloist appeared to improvise.

Just three general reflections after hearing these fiddlers five. One is that violinists—like most instrumentalists, but unlike many modern singers—do not come before the public without adequate technical equipment. They are in tune. They have learned to produce tone that remains pure, even, beautiful, controlled through all the ranges and through all dynamics. They sound divisions clearly, and they know how to trill. It is no doubt harder for singers to acquire these essentials of secure musical utterance, but many of them seem scarcely even to aspire to such basic security. Second, none of the players were flashy. But, third, in none of the violin-and-piano performances was there a real giving-and-taking, mutually inspiring duo. Mr. Hough is the pianist best known as a soloist in his own right (his name alone was billed with the violinist's in type of equal size), and his playing was cultivated and beautiful. But not in Brahms, not in Grieg was there free, stirring dialogue between him and Mr. Bell. For the rest: happy memories of Midori's tone and phrasing; Mr. Silverstein's warm, wise art; Miss Makarski's singing of Harbison and her quiet grace in Fauré; Mr. Bell's poise and his ardent advocacy of Grieg; Mr. Krysa's—and the young students'—prowess in Berio. Charm is a quality often underrated. Midori's and Mr. Silverstein's playing had it. Mr. Hough showed it in Schubert.

—ANDREW PORTER

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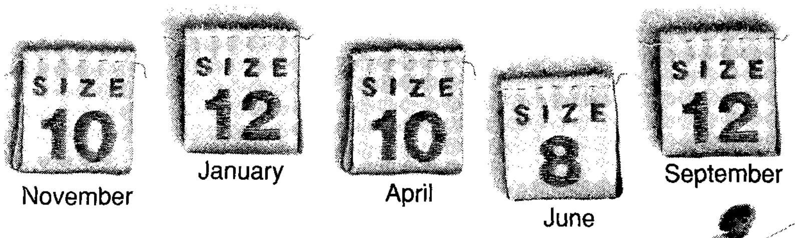

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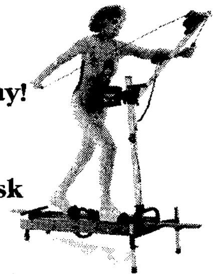

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THE DIPLOMATIC ROUND

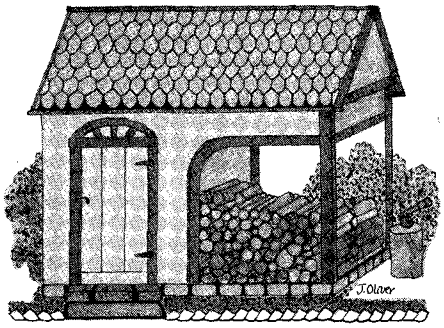
MISREADINGS

WHEN George Bush announced, on November 8th, that he was doubling the deployment of American military personnel in the Persian Gulf, some diplomats began to consider the downside of a President whose energies appear to be wholly absorbed by his foreign policy. The policy, they reckoned, could become a victim of the leader's admitted fascination with it. Because Bush avoids the domestic agenda, his successes—winners, as they're called—must flow from his foreign policy, but diplomats regard the effort to achieve winners there in the short term as a poor substitute for measured policy proceeding at an unforced pace. Since issues close to home usually control elections, most Presidents, however much they are attracted to or engaged in problems overseas, try to develop a few winners on the domestic front which they can point to. Take the example of Franklin Roosevelt, whose winners at home sustained a foreign policy that edged America toward a war that the larger part of the country strongly opposed. Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon cared principally about foreign policy but took care not to neglect the domestic agenda.

Most diplomats wondered why Bush chose to send so much additional force to Saudi Arabia. A lot had been accomplished, thanks mainly to his own strenuous efforts to build a coalition. The initial American deployment had been approved by a political consensus that included America's Western European allies, the Soviet Union, and Japan. Other Arab countries, notably Egypt and Syria, were contributing forces to help defend Saudi Arabia. The United Nations Security Council had produced a package of sanctions built around an exceptionally punitive embargo. The world community had aligned itself against Saddam Hussein far more resolutely than most diplomats had expected it to.

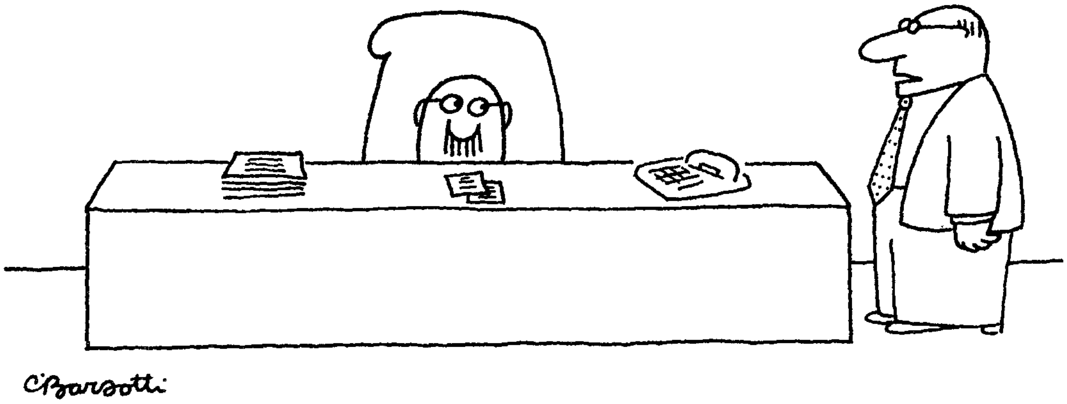
Between November 8th and November 29th, Bush and Secretary of State James Baker worked feverishly to enlist support for United Nations Resolution 678, which authorized the use of force to eject Iraq from Kuwait. In affixing to the resolution a deadline for withdrawal—January 15, 1991—Bush was seen by a few diplomats as opening a window for negotiation but by more of them as denying himself any option after the deadline expired other than the use of force. Because deadlines tend to take control of situations, most diplomats dislike them. And Saddam Hussein, many felt, would see this one as putting his back to the wall—as aimed, actually, at humiliating him. Middle East specialists saw the combination of a doubled American deployment and the deadline as all but certain to bring on a war that many of them feared would be calamitous. The huge American presence in the Gulf (four hundred and fifteen thousand people) could not long be sustained, either logistically or politically. Also, spring sandstorms and summer heat would make the position virtually untenable. "The weight of your military apparatus pushed you to war," a senior French diplomat says. "When you doubled your deployment, you had to fight quickly. That was obvious. We were condemned to follow, although we were not party to the decisions."

A good way to incite an Arab to violence or martyrdom is to insult him; that partly explains why Arabs are so maddeningly polite to each other in public. An even better way is to humiliate him, or try to. The saying "Never spit on a man's mustache unless it is on fire" is an admonitory Arab tribute to the exercise of common sense. Diplomats who had sung Bush's praises during the coalition-building phase in August felt by late autumn that, although styling himself as one of them, he had abused the rules of their trade. He was sending the tough messages publicly, not privately. He was treating Hussein as a world-class tyrant—equating him with Hitler, even though Hussein was hardly in a position to ravage a large part of the world. He more nearly resembles a tribal warrior chief equipped with the moral values and the world perspective of a Mafia don. But he is a head of state, has been one for nearly twelve years, and insists on being treated like one. Bush talked about "kicking ass"—a phrase that gains strength in translation—and he has never ceased to personalize the quarrel; in his speech to the country on January 16th, the day the war began, he mentioned Hussein twenty times. The tough rhetoric and the personalization, diplomats say, have served only to build up Hussein—to make it harder for fellow-Arabs to cut him down to size and for outright enemies at home to enlist help in toppling him, or trying to. The consensus view is that Bush would have been well advised to ignore Hussein. But Bush wasn't taking advice. The hard-nosed decisions and the hard-nosed rhetoric were his own. The President had become—in the language of intelligence—his own case officer.



Back in August, Bush didn't want a war and didn't think there would be one, according to most foreign diplomats and insiders. He seemed to feel, they say, that Saddam Hussein would yield in the face of sanctions with teeth and the threat of war with America. But Hussein showed no sign of yielding, and Bush, for whatever reason, began to feel that time was working against his grand coalition; he said as much, privately seeming to equate delay in moving against Iraq with defeat. It was put about that Hussein wasn't "getting the message." Doubling the deployment would presumably be a message that *would* get through, and oblige him to back down. Arabists in and out of government could have explained to Bush why Hussein wouldn't back down if he was threatened, but Bush had little contact with such people, and neither did the members of his small inner circle. For a man who takes pride in his cautious nature, Bush seemed fairly far out of character: as the autumn wore on, his approach to the crisis and its begetter struck a large part of the foreign-policy community as increasingly febrile.

In mid-December, a British diplomat told me that the decision to attack Iraq had been made; all that remained was the need to strengthen the case for the action, he said. The Administration had tried to point to an impending Iraqi nuclear-weapons capability as an urgent problem; however, the case for any such near-term threat, about which nothing had been heard prior to August 2nd, seemed to collapse under expert commentary. But the Saudis and the Egyptians were pressing Washington to destroy Hussein and his military machine. In September, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Washington, was saying privately that the war might well start in the second half of October. Bandar's voice carries farther than most, not because he is King Fahd's nephew but because he has more influence over the King than anyone else in the royal family, including Prince Sultan, the Defense Minister, who is Fahd's brother and Bandar's father.



"Now, Winston, I have a very busy afternoon ahead of me, so please scurry back to your own desk and let's not have any trouble."

• •

From the start, this crisis presented Bush with singularly complex political and military problems, but they didn't faze him. On October 9th, he was asked in a news conference why he thought he was more comfortable with foreign affairs than with domestic issues, and was better at them. "I don't want to get stretched out on the couch too far in terms of analysis now," he said. "But, you know, when you get a problem with the complexities that . . . the Gulf has now, I enjoy trying to keep this—put the coalition together and keep it together and work toward what I think is a proper end." He then conceded that he had more fun working on foreign problems than on domestic ones. Probably no President since Roosevelt, or perhaps even Abraham Lincoln, has had to play a hand as difficult as the one Bush was dealt by Saddam Hussein. One would like to feel that Bush knows that. But it seems clear to Middle East buffs that this incurious, unreflective President set out to overpower Saddam Hussein psychologically without any understanding of his psychology.

IF anything, Saddam Hussein's misreading of Bush was even more serious than Bush's misreading of him. "It is a catastrophe," a senior Egyptian diplomat, who reflects the views of many Arab diplomats, said two days before the war started. "Had Saddam known what would happen, he wouldn't have done it. But now he has escalated this to the point of seeing himself as leader of all the world's oppressed people, not just the forces of Islam. He sees the prophets of revolution—Mao, Castro, Ho Chi Minh—as all gone; Communism and the other isms are in the dustbin, and he poses himself as standing alone against United States imperialism. CNN and all of that reinforce Saddam's view of himself as the new Nasser—at a minimum. But he also miscalculated the reaction of the Arab world. He thought he could do what he did and survive with just pro-forma objections from the rest of it. And then he could confront the outside world by saying, 'This is an Arab problem. We Arabs must settle it ourselves.' He had lost touch with reality."

Saddam Hussein's pathology captured the rage and frustration, the dreams and fantasies of the teeming Arab street, where there is a need for heroes. The invasion of Kuwait came as no surprise to many close Hussein watchers. He had, they thought, signalled his intentions and made very clear his conviction that America would not oppose him. In Amman last February, he made an especially tough, unprovoked speech: "We saw that the United States as a superpower departed Lebanon immediately when some marines were killed, the very men who are considered to be the most prominent symbol of its arrogance. The whole United States Administration would have been called into question had the forces that conquered Panama continued to be engaged by the Panamanian armed forces. The United States has been defeated in some combat arenas, for all the forces it possesses, and it has displayed signs of fatigue, frustration, and hesitation when committing aggression on other peoples' rights and acting from motives of arrogance and hegemony."

Arab diplomats now view that speech as another miscalculation. One of them, an Egyptian, says, "Saddam saw the change in the international climate as meaning that the two superpowers were busy creating a new world order, and he concluded that neither of them could or would do anything about him—they were too tied up with other personalities, like Helmut Kohl."

"He didn't know when to stop—he never does," one Arab ambassador says. "He could have gone in and changed the government in Kuwait, withdrawn, and then have been seen throughout the Gulf as the dominant figure. He could have treated Kuwait the way the United States treated Panama."

Most diplomats feel that, despite what Bush may have thought, Saddam

Hussein was not intimidated by the prospect of a fight with America. Hussein would not have expected the Americans to march on Baghdad, they say, and he may have felt that after surviving an initial powerful blow he would be the gainer politically: he would be perceived by the Arab street as having fought imperialism to a draw, and at that point world opinion would turn in his favor, and the clamor for a ceasefire would shatter Bush's coalition.

Saddam Hussein seems to feel that he has little to lose. He is widely regarded as a paranoid personality, and, for some reason, he concluded nearly two years ago that Bush wanted him done away with. In October of 1989, Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's President, came to Washington and told Bush that Hussein was convinced that Bush was out to kill or overthrow him. Bush sought to reassure Hussein—unsuccessfully, it appears—through Mubarak.

Saddam Hussein has previously shown a fondness for going to the brink and an inability to recognize it when he gets there. Among the things that seem to drive him toward danger is a craving for respect. Some diplomats feel that if Secretary of State Baker, a consummate dealmaker, had gone to Baghdad last summer—just before the crisis, or even just afterward—Hussein might have been reachable. Baker didn't go, and some closely involved diplomats say that within a few weeks it was probably too late for any such mission.

AFTER a hard sell of the embargo against Iraq—perhaps even, at first, an overselling of it—to the United Nations, the Bush Administration lost little time once it had been set up in turning away from the harshest and most promising group of peacetime sanctions ever put together. Perhaps the main concern of the Administration—among the concerns expressed, at least—was that the coalition would break up before the quarantine took serious effect. Most foreign diplomats —Arab and European—I spoke to before and after January 16th felt that the coalition would have stayed the course, if only because the alternative was a war that all but a few of its members wished to avoid. Defending Saudi Arabia from aggression and pressuring Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait were purposes that united the coalition. Driving Iraq out by force of arms was judged more divisive, and may still become so, depending on whether the war drags on.

Bush has seemed to lack what Eisenhower called "the courage of patience." By late fall, a procession of former senior government figures had come forward to urge patience. On October 28th, Paul Nitze, who, at eighty-four, has logged more direct experience with national-security affairs than any other American alive, argued strongly for giving the embargo time to take its toll. "It can in time become intolerable" for Saddam Hussein, Nitze said.

A month later, a cluster of comparable figures testified in hearings held by the Senate Armed Services Committee. They included James Schlesinger, a former Secretary of Defense and director of Central Intelligence; two recent and greatly respected chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe and General David Jones; and two former national-security advisers, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger (who also served as Secretary of State). All of them except Kissinger, who has taken a tough line from the start, argued strongly for staying on course, and stressed the pitfalls of going to war before sanctions and diplomacy could be given a chance. All of them saw the embargo as "biting heavily," in Crowe's words—partly by cutting off oil exports and foreign-exchange earnings. Iraq's economy, Schlesinger said, "is rapidly becoming a basket case." The issue, Crowe said, "is not whether an embargo will work but whether we have the patience to let it take effect." Military industry, Schlesinger said, would "follow the downward path of civilian industry." The witnesses all feared that America, by starting a war, would extend and deepen regional political instabilities, and also—according to Crowe, who served in the Middle East for two years and knows it well—"very likely multiply manyfold the anti-American resentment." On the same point Schlesinger said, "I believe that the direct cost of combat . . . will be the lesser part of the total cost. The Middle East would never be the same."

A few days later, on December 5th, Baker, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was asked why the Administration seemed to be giving up on the sanctions policy within three months of having pressed the case for it. "Nobody can ever tell you that sanctions alone will force Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait," Baker replied. "I am personally very pessimistic that they will. This pessimism . . . is shared by our recent intelligence estimate."

On that very day, however, William Webster, the director of Central Intelligence, testified on the embargo before the House Armed Services Committee, and drew a curiously more upbeat picture. He saw the embargo as seriously affecting the civilian economy. "Probably only energy-related and some military industries will still be functioning by next spring," he said. Iraq's military, he said, "could probably maintain near-current levels of readiness [only] for as long as nine months." Nine months from December, as some diplomats noted, meant September of 1991—a month before the next weather window for military action against Iraq would open, if such action hadn't been taken during the current winter.

Those who favored fighting now argued that any delay would not only weaken the coalition but allow Iraq to strengthen its forces and its preparations for the inevitable conflict. Many of those who favored relying on the sanctions until next fall felt that Iraq might well become debilitated to a point where the military would be more emboldened or better able to seize control from Hussein, especially as its ability to wage the war that lay ahead was being steadily eroded.

As for diplomacy, Washington never did see a role for it in settling the Gulf crisis. An early Baker visit might have had some success, and many thought that Eduard Shevardnadze, who resigned as Soviet Foreign Minister in December, could have moved matters off dead center if he had gone to Baghdad as the emissary of one superpower who had the confidence of the other. The only other possibility was a so-called Arab solution, which seemed to point toward either Algeria in the role of intermediary or Saudi Arabia as broker of a deal between Iraq and Kuwait's royal family. Algeria's President Chadli Bendjedid has good relations with the major players in the Middle East, including Saddam Hussein and King Fahd; he and Fahd are actually very close, and they consulted before Bendjedid went to Baghdad in mid-December for discussions with Hussein—discussions that caused something of a stir but were probably a lot less significant than they seemed then. According to an Egyptian diplomat, Hussein told Bendjedid when they were talking privately that he was prepared to be flexible. But his flexibility, by most accounts, turned out to be a willingness to discuss the Kuwait situation once other issues involving occupation forces—the question of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, for example—were settled.

On at least two occasions, the Saudis seemed to be flirting with the notion of outlining a deal that one set of their Arab brothers might offer certain other Arab brothers. The idea was that Saddam Hussein would withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, assured by the Saudis that afterward he would obtain from "negotiations" with the Kuwaitis much of what he had sought before; the deal would have included ownership of or long-term leases on two islands—Būbiyān and Warbah—adjacent to the channels that give Iraq its limited access to the Gulf. It may be, as some diplomats believe, that the Saudi royal family was divided on whether to push in this direction, with King Fahd becoming progressively more unwilling to be the go-between. Like Egypt's Mubarak, Fahd felt betrayed by Saddam Hussein, who had assured each of them that he wouldn't invade Kuwait. "The Saudis would not have brokered a deal unless it included a cut in Iraq's armed forces to less than half a million," an American who knows them well says. "It wasn't just a question of getting him out of Kuwait. They want his military machine capable of offsetting Iran, but no more than that. They feel strongly, because they would be the first target of his next aggression."

The French tried hard, but unavailingly, to edge Hussein toward negotia-

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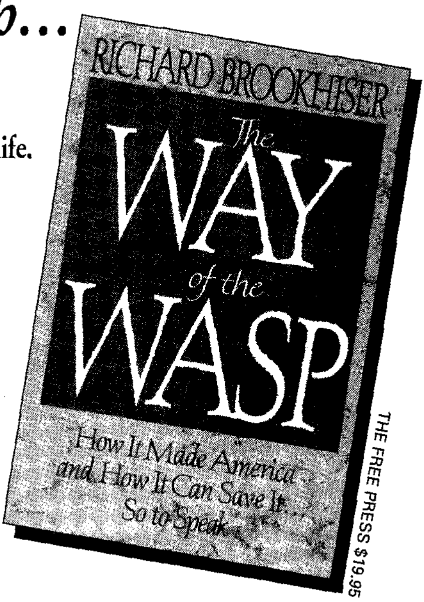

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tions. In return for his agreement in principle to withdraw from Kuwait, they were prepared to push for a conference on regional issues—notably the Palestine question. If Hussein had shown any interest in the French initiative, or in Algeria's, he could probably have achieved his major goal—breaking up the coalition against him. He didn't even try. At no time, it seems, did he show any genuine flexibility or willingness to leave Kuwait on remotely negotiable terms.

RARELY has a great democracy been moved toward war as ineluctably as President Bush moved the United States toward the showdown with Saddam Hussein. And rarely has there been such a lack of clarity about goals, both immediate and longer term. The Administration has from the first had trouble defining them. In his testimony Admiral Crowe asked, "What would we expect our commanders to do—drive to Baghdad, free Kuwait, destroy Iraqi forces, eliminate his nuclear capability, or all of the above, et cetera? The character of your objectives influences the whole operation and your tactical plans. The more ambitious the goals are, the less likely a peaceful solution can be found, the greater the casualties, the lengthier the campaign, and the more difficult postwar reconstruction."

A senior American diplomat tried to show me how difficult these questions are. "Suppose we drive him out of Kuwait and he doesn't give up," he said. "There will then be pressure for a pause. Can you pause for a few days and just resume fighting? Could we stop at the border and then rely on sanctions? He benefits from a pause. We couldn't pull our ground forces out, because Kuwait would then be vulnerable to another Iraqi thrust. Also, the pause gives the Israelis a chance to jump in, which helps Saddam politically and harms everyone else. So what is the endgame? Do we cross the Kuwait-Iraq border as if it were the Thirty-eighth Parallel? Do we get drawn into a pitched battle in Iraq? Do we stop at the suburbs of Baghdad?"

The longer the fighting goes on, the more Saddam Hussein will benefit politically, diplomats say, because Arabs in most places will see the war as aimed mainly at destroying Iraq, not at freeing Kuwait; people will begin to forget what started the conflict. European diplomats say, if somewhat shakily, that Bush is still willing to stop the fighting if Iraq's Army does leave Kuwait. They agree, however, that there are any number of events or provocations—Iraq's use of chemical or biological weapons, for example—that could dissolve America's restraint. A senior State Department official concurs, adding that heavy American casualties would also make restraint impossible. "Most people would feel that we had liberated a sandpit at the cost of many American lives, and then stopped without removing the threat of more trouble from this man and this Army," he says. "But if we go on to Baghdad what happens? Do we administer it? Do we embark on a 'Noriega hunt' for Saddam in the caves of Iraq? Who would be with us in either exercise?"

Diplomats and State Department officials with whom I spoke about the next phase seem to hover between awe and resignation. What we do, some of them say, is, in the jargon, "heavily scenario-dependent." One senior official said of the fighting, "I can't tell you what the consequences will be. One thing is clear: we are not interested in dismembering Iraq, or in the Lebanonization of Iraq. My guess is that we will force Saddam out of Kuwait, at great expense to his forces. But I expect him to stay in the war, or at least in a declared state of war. He will have very few cards left—one of them being terrorism. He will try to manipulate the Arab masses and remain the focal point."

American intentions toward Saddam Hussein and his military machine are another uncertainty. Many diplomats would argue against expunging the former or too much of the latter. A martyred Hussein, they warn, could become an explosive problem. They say that, ideally, he should emerge from the conflict humiliated and unable to govern effectively a society that would see the two wars he provoked as having discredited him and impoverished this rich and well-endowed country; if its people or its Army turned on him, so much the better. Also, most diplomats and former government officials see no strategic advantage in destroying Iraq's basic military structure. Indeed, Washington's concern about a stable regional balance of power largely explains Hussein's lengthy claim on America's benevolence. A moderately strong Iraq, an Iraq just strong enough, could be a makeweight to the larger and potentially stronger Iran.

Arab members of the coalition share an interest in purging Iraq of chemical and biological weapons, and its rudimentary nuclear program as well, but not in destroying all the rest. Nor do they want Iraqis to consider themselves martyred as a people by fellow-Arabs. And the interest of Arab states in a stable regional power balance is obviously at least as great as America's. Even Syria, which has been Iraq's bitterest rival in recent years, doesn't want to see it devastated by the war.

As always, however, the Arab states find much on which to disagree and to contest one another. The vital question for some, perhaps most, is who emerges from the war in the strongest political position. Egypt, the largest of them, feels that it should be the big winner in the region, but it must contend with a shrill anti-war, anti-Western bias on the part of many of its Islamic citizens. President Mubarak affects unconcern, but, depending on how destructive the war becomes, the outcry against Egypt's role could turn into a serious problem, according to Egypt watchers. "Mubarak is gambling," a senior French diplomat says. "He is bidding to become the regional leader and security guarantor." Egypt's leadership also worries about Syria, which intends to use the war to advance its claim to lead the Arab world. Syria's participation in the coalition is seen on all sides as a way of prying increased financial help from Saudi Arabia. The leaders of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia are worried about the sixty million people in the four countries of the Maghreb (North Africa). Popular sentiment there is passionately pro-Iraqi, and leaders of a resurgent Islamic fundamentalism are using the war as a club with which to attack increasingly defensive governments. CNN is bringing people all over the Arab world into direct contact with the war and its effects; even the more sheltered Saudis are exposed, and diplomats who know Saudi Arabia are divided on how much the war will change that country. Some see events as inexorably pushing the society toward a less insular and anachronistic style—pushing it to become more like other places. Others say that the changes will be cosmetic—and more apparent than real. But no one disputes the Saudis' need for a long-term commitment from Washington to help them cope with the domestic vulnerabilities that they created by bringing in American forces to defend them.

Iran will be a beneficiary of the war, given the likelihood that its enemy Saddam Hussein will become a casualty and that Iraq's military forces will be at least partly destroyed. Iran is breaking out of its isolation. The Saudis are about to restore diplomatic relations, and the Soviets have agreed to sell Iran their most advanced combat aircraft. The leadership in Tehran is thought to see the war as offering the country an unalloyed opportunity to reposition itself regionally and internationally. Even the Egyptians, according to one of their diplomats, now see Iran as "better positioned than any rival" to move toward a quasi-dominant role in the region, mainly because, as he says, "it has nothing to do except avoid being dragged in on either side." The British, too, see Iran as pointing toward the key role—with Saudi Arabia and a diminished Iraq as a supporting cast. And on February 7th Baker told a congressional committee that Iran could be "a major power" in any post-war regional security system.

Iran and Turkey watch each other warily, each concerned that the other may decide to help a defeated Iraq dismember itself along the lines of its historic divisions. Although Turkey had been acting like a neutral, its President, Turgut Ozal, decided on the eve of the war to allow American bombers to strike Iraq from bases in his country. The decision split the populace, a large part of which worries that Iraq may return the favor by attacking Turkish cities with missiles. Turkey's parliament had been assured by the Foreign Minister that the American planes would be used for strictly defensive purposes. For some time, President Ozal has tried and failed to gather support in Western Europe for Turkish membership in the European Community. He and other Turks worry that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, their main link to the Western system, is becoming a relic of the Cold War. Ozal doubtless feels that helping America will bring rich dividends and revive Turkey's political fortunes. Whether Ozal also sees targets of opportunity due south is less clear. In an interview with a Turkish television network on January 8th, he said, "There will certainly be a new order in the south after the crisis. . . . We have not intervened in any way yet. . . . Turkey is not the gendarme of the West. No, Turkey has been here for four hundred years and is one of the countries that know the region best."

The interviewer then asked if Turkey would be "in these regions in an active role."

"Yes, we certainly will," Ozal replied. Ozal doesn't actually have designs on any part of northern Iraq, because, for various reasons, the effect would be politically destabilizing inside Turkey. But diplomats think that Ozal, too, envisions three pillars of power in the Middle East—Turkey, Egypt, and, again, the Saudis. America would throw its political support behind the system, in his view, partly because the lead role would belong to its always reliable ally Turkey.

So far, the major beneficiary of the war has been Israel—partly because from the outset of the crisis its government pushed hardest for a military solution. Saddam Hussein's Iraq has constituted the greatest military threat to Israel's security. In September, Israel declared its strong interest in taking part in the operational planning for the air war against Iraq. One insider says, "The Israelis were saying, 'You tell us what sectors you will hit so that we stay out of your way,' and they got stiffed on this approach." According to a British diplomat, Washington said, "We'll take care of Iraq, and the biggest danger is that you might try to help us." Most coalition members now see Israel's behavior as perhaps the most crucial and most dangerous of the war's numerous variables.

Bush and Baker dislike and distrust Israel's leadership, and in the early stages of the Gulf crisis Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was the only friendly Middle East leader with whom Bush wasn't in frequent telephone contact; in fact, he didn't call Shamir at all. That changed after Bush's announcement on November 8th, and the two men now talk regularly. Merely by being forbearing, Israel is building credit with Bush that its leadership never had before. For diplomats, the looming question is whether after the war Bush will insist on a serious process aimed at actually settling Arab-Israeli differences—either in an international conference or, more likely, in some smaller setting. A former senior American official and Middle East expert says, "We are committed to the Israelis' security, and they know that. We are removing the threat to them of Saddam just as they wanted us to. And we did something extraordinary by giving them the Patriots"—the anti-missile missiles—"and the crews to operate them. But I don't know how Bush and Baker will play it."

Bush's National Security Council staff worries that the end of the war will bring on a new round of Israel-bashing from Europe. Asked about that, a senior State Department figure said, "We are going to need the Europeans as never before—in the U.N., in deciding which sanctions to keep in force, and also in putting together a suppliers' club to promote restraint in transfers of arms, especially weapons of mass destruction and their technology. Also in enforcing that kind of regime. We couldn't carry out any Gulf policy independent of the Europeans—not just France and Britain but also the Italians, the Spanish, and the Dutch. And when we talk to the Europeans about all this they will say, 'Yes, but . . . but there must be some resolution of the ultimate source of regional instability' "—the Palestine issue.

I played some of that back to another official at State—one with different responsibilities. "Countries inside and outside the region will have to contrib-

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ute to an environment of trust and confidence," he said. "On arms control, Arab states and Israel will have to agree." And what did he mean by "contribute"? "Arab states will have to agree to make peace with Israel," he replied. But will they do that if there is no progress toward peace? "It is a Gordian knot that we must find a way of cutting," he said.

American officials expect the Soviet Union, however disordered, to be one of the key influences on whatever develops in the aftermath of the war. Depending, perhaps, on who is in charge in Moscow, Soviet influence may be constructive or, as one official says, the Soviet "military may want to see a major bloodying of the U.S." He adds, "No country will be better positioned in the post-conflict period than the Soviet Union. It will insist on a peace process, and may be really tough about it. The Soviets may try to maneuver a situation in which the United States is seen as Israel's sponsor and themselves as the champion of everyone else. If I worked in the Kremlin, I'd already be writing the cables—telling my embassies that the stupid Americans are breaking the back of the Arab resistance to Saddam Hussein."

MOST governments are having trouble planning for the next phase in the Middle East. One Arab ambassador chose to reply to a question put to him in mid-January about what his country would do after the war by saying, "What does Bush do? I don't know what he does or what he will do. Let's say insufficient thought has been given to this. Everyone is so involved with what is going on."

A senior French diplomat said to me, "In 1944, we had an Allied policy on what to do with Germany. Now we have a void." He might have added that by 1944, with the war in Europe and Asia still to be won, Allied planners had designed a postwar order that included the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Baker has often said—and no one disagrees—that a by-product of the war must be a regional security structure, but no one yet knows what it might look like or what the American role in it should be. Opinion will divide sharply on whether American military forces should be left behind and, if so, for how long and at what strength. (There will clearly be a strong American naval presence in the Gulf, whatever happens.) Iran and Syria have already said that the long-term problem for the region will be the American military presence.

Every war must end, but how it ends must surely determine what happens afterward. If, as everyone says, there is no ceasefire strategy, it is unlikely that the coalition is close to deciding on how this war should be formally concluded. In the days just ahead, however, Bush will have to decide on a war-fighting strategy, and in the weeks ahead on a war-termination strategy and a political endgame. It is a vastly complex and altogether daunting agenda.

Many diplomats argue that the war should be ended at Kuwait's border, with a benign and non-punitive settlement, citing as models the Treaty of Westphalia, which settled the Thirty Years' War, and the Congress of Vienna. The signs remain unclear. "The only new thing in the new world order is Gorbachev's meaning it when he says he can't control his military," a European diplomat says. (In palmier days, Gorbachev sometimes cited opposition from the Soviet military as a reason for a delay in tackling projects that he wasn't yet ready to commit himself to.) Back in August, there was talk within Bush's entourage of managing the Gulf crisis in a fashion that would become a blueprint for dealing with post-Cold War crises. Diplomats who see little new thinking in an early application of massive force point out that although Saddam Hussein is a primitive thug, the world produces others like him, and they, too, crave weapons of mass destruction in order to intimidate rivals and enlarge their horizons. "Are we to fight them all?" one State Department figure asks. Toward the end of the summer, there did seem to be an alternative to force, largely because the United Nations was performing exactly as its creators had envisioned that it would. Whether the war that has started ends quickly or drags on for months, its implications defy immediate comprehension. And, however it may end, the mood of most diplomats now is sombre and in some cases deeply pessimistic. Bush and Saddam Hussein, they think, misjudged each other and thereby set in motion a course of events that neither could control.

—JOHN NEWHOUSE

BOOKS

The Last Emperor

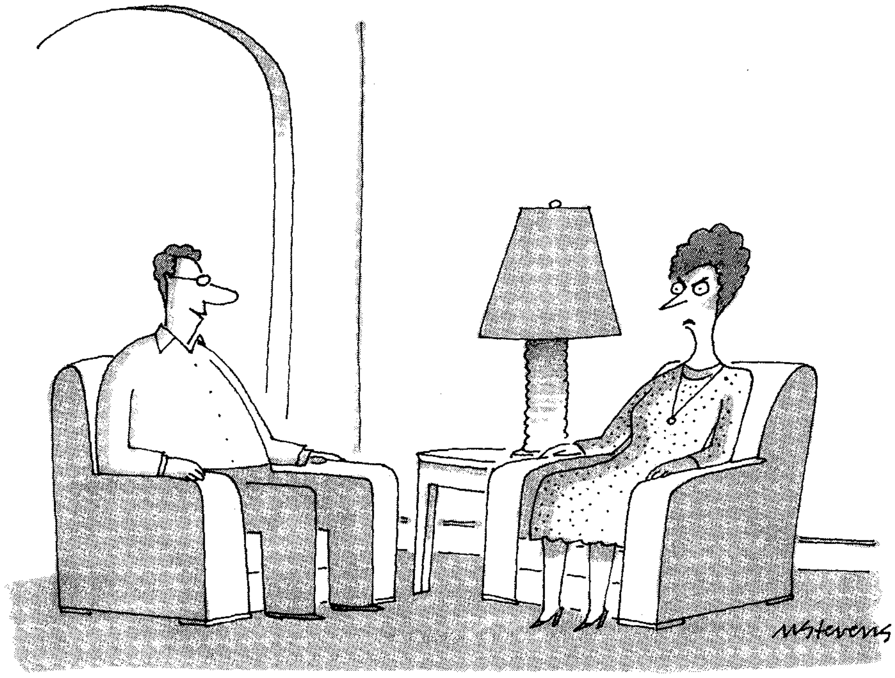
WILLIAM S. PALEY became president of the Columbia Broadcasting System in 1928, when he was twenty-six, and he ran the company until 1983, when he retired and assumed the title of "founder chairman." Already a wealthy man when he and his family bought Columbia (the Paleys were cigar manufacturers), he was deeply attached to the style of living that enormous amounts of money make possible, and he cultivated a taste in fine art, fine furniture, fine clothing, and fine food. He married two striking and intelligent women—Dorothy Hart Hearst, whom he divorced in 1947, and Barbara Cushing Mortimer, called Babe, whom he married soon after his divorce and who died in 1978—in a time when it was expected of striking and intelligent women of a certain class that they would devote themselves to the comfort and adornment of their husbands' lives. He was, on social occasions and on most business occasions, a charming man who disliked unpleasantness and preferred to let others act as the agents of his disapproval; and, as radio and then television grew to become the most influential and lucrative communications media in the history of the world, he had a personality equipped to extract a full measure of satisfaction from the power and prestige his position afforded him—something that was not lost on those who knew him. "He looks," Truman Capote once remarked, "like a man who has just swallowed an entire human being."

Sally Bedell Smith's life of Paley, "In All His Glory" (Simon & Schuster; $29.95), is a book for two audiences—one that would like a peek at the glamour of Paley's world, and another that would like to confirm its intuition that someone other people find so glamorous must really be a person of rather limited accomplishment. For the first audience, the home furnishings, vacations, distinguished golfing partners, and romantic liaisons in Paley's life are carefully catalogued. One appendix lists the bequests, mostly of expensive jewelry, in Babe Paley's will; another gives the dollar value of Paley's holdings in CBS stock for each year of his life, beginning in 1928 (it increased). For the audience that wants to see what the legend looks like with the varnish removed, there are stories of coldness to friends and to children, of bad business decisions and of credit stolen from others for good ones, and of personal mythmaking on an imperial scale. First, we are asked to admire the cake, and then we get to watch it being eaten.

This is a common enough form of celebrity biography, of course, and satisfying in its mildly opportunistic way. It's nice to know how people who strike it rich spend their money, and it's also nice to feel that if we struck it rich ourselves we'd deserve it a little more and spend the money a little less selfishly. When we read of Babe Paley's being driven by her chauffeur to Kennedy Airport so that she can pick up the freshly shot game bird she has had flown in from Europe for her husband's dinner, our disappointment at being financially incapable of this sort of thing is exactly balanced by our satisfaction in feeling morally incapable of it as well.

Smith's chapters on Paley's personal life contain many stories like the story of the imported fowl, but the story of the fowl is about as exciting as most of them get. For Paley aspired merely to live well, and in what he understood to be the best possible taste; and although this aspiration led him, given his means, to excesses, it precluded any genuine folly. He was, with a few philanthropic exceptions, much too prudent to waste his money on anything but himself. His single traditional vice, apparently, was philandering, which is neither the most unusual vice for a very rich man to have nor the most interesting.

Smith is not a celebrity biographer by trade. She is a journalist who has covered television for the *Times*, among other publications, and her treatment of Paley's career as a broadcaster is somewhat less breathless—and stronger for it—than her treatment of his career as a devotee of the high life. Her pages on the business side of Paley's life are concerned mostly with debunking his reputation as a broadcasting genius. She does concede, as most commentators do, that Paley understood better and sooner than anyone else in broadcasting the importance of programming (it seems odd that people in broadcasting ever doubted that the choice and quality of programs were important, and distributed their resources elsewhere, but they did), and that he had an instinct for guessing what most Americans wanted to hear and see. But she also points out that Paley went into radio not because he had a precocious sense of its potential, as he later claimed, but simply in order



"I just said that for comic effect."

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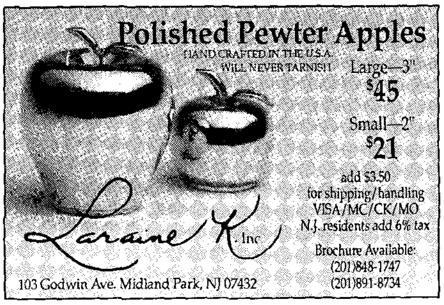

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to get some executive training before returning to the cigar business; that he saw no money in television when it appeared, and discouraged efforts to move his company into it; and that during the years—from the late forties through the mid-fifties—when CBS assembled its television network and overtook NBC to become the dominant force in the industry, he was generally distracted by the enjoyment of his private life, and by a brief stint in public service, and it was really Frank Stanton, the president of the company (by then, Paley had become the chairman), who engineered CBS's triumph.

This part of the cake has been sliced up before—in Robert Metz's "CBS: Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye" (1975), for instance, and in David Halberstam's "The Powers That Be" (1979), a work whose sections on CBS so irritated Paley when he read a version of them in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1975 that he (and a large staff) composed his own memoir, "As It Happened," and arranged to have it published a few weeks before Halberstam's book appeared. What distinguishes "In All His Glory" from those earlier efforts is all the stargazing attention it pays to Paley's personal life; but the stargazing makes a point of its own. For the way Paley lived—the homes, the art collection, even the wives—had as much to do with the success of CBS, and of network television generally, as with the way he did business. There was nothing foreordained about the dominance of network television; it was achieved in defiance of the normal mechanisms of the marketplace and of the normal tinkering instincts of politicians. Network television was an empire protected by an image, and it was Paley's real genius to understand why it was that every enhancement of his private life was also an investment in the continuing prosperity of the company he ran and the medium he helped to establish.

AMERICANS who grew up in the postwar era are so accustomed to television as a fixture in their lives that its presence seems almost a dispensation of nature. Virtually everyone's memory of it is the same. If you had a set in 1955, it had thirteen VHF (very high frequency) channels, all except three of which probably broadcast static—unless, by performing calisthenics with your aerial, you could pick up a network station from a distant city, the ghostly twin of a local channel. The picture was black and white, and if you switched on the set very early or very late in the day you could contemplate an eerie piece of electronic arcana, now nearly forgotten—a test pattern. Ed Sullivan had already been on the air for seven years.

In 1970, your set had an extra dial, for UHF, the ultra-high-frequency spectrum (Channels 14 to 83). This was a piece of machinery required by Congress on all televisions made after 1963, and it was somehow awkward to operate: you always seemed to be dialling past your station. On the VHF dial, there was now an "educational" channel: the Public Broadcasting System had begun operating in 1969, the culmination of seventeen years of efforts to establish a national noncommercial network. You mostly watched the commercial networks, though, or an unaffiliated channel that, when it wasn't showing sports or old movies, showed network reruns. The colors (color programming began in 1965) were so brilliant they seemed radioactive. Ed Sullivan was still on the air.

Today, even the Ed Sullivan impressionists are gone. You watch a sleek cube fed by a cable, and, by keeping your thumb pressed to a remote control, you can skim several dozen channels—over a hundred on some cable systems—in a few seconds. One channel plays music videos all day; one broadcasts world news; one has a local talk show (a consequence of mandated "public access"); one or more, for a fee, show recent movies, uncensored; one has a psychic you can call for on-the-air advice; one displays jewelry you can shop for by phone. You can watch programs on which pickup trucks with oversized tires are driven across rows of parked cars, and programs on which naked people discuss sex in a manner so unstimulating as to make you turn back to watch the pickup trucks. There is always sport, and most of the local teams' games are available. There are (since the arrival of Fox, in 1986) five "over the air" networks, and one or more "superstations," beamed into the system by satellite. There is still, of course, nothing to watch, but you can turn to Channel 3 and put a rented movie in your videocassette player.

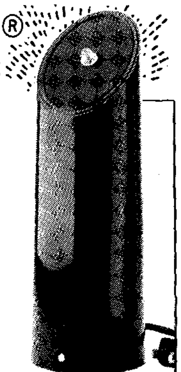
Because we tend to think of technological development as analogous with biological development, we're likely to assume that changes in our experience of television reflect changes in television technology. It seems like a simple matter of evolution. We had to have black-and-white pictures before we could have color; we had to have thirteen VHF channels before we could have seventy UHF channels, and to have national over-the-air networks before we could have cable, pay channels, and local programming. We lived with broadcasting so that one day we could have narrowcasting. The point of J. Fred MacDonald's "One Nation Under Television: The Rise and Decline of Network TV" (Pantheon; $24.95) is that the development of American television had in fact almost nothing to do with technology. Network television was no more natural or inevitable than any of the other empires that locked the Cold War world into place. It was no more accidental, either, but (like those other empires) it considered itself extremely vulnerable to accident, and understood eternal vigilance to be the price of its survival.

The standard one-volume history of American television is Erik Barnouw's "Tube of Plenty," published in 1975 and recently reprinted in a second revised edition. MacDonald's book doesn't replace Barnouw's, but it doesn't repeat it, either. It's a fresh version of the same story: a little bit more "inside" the industry, and statistically and anecdotally richer, than Barnouw's book. MacDonald has taught the history of broadcasting for over twenty years, and "One Nation Under Television" is his fifth book on the subject. So it's reassuring to learn that, as informed as he is about the medium's technological and corporate history, he has no clearer idea than anyone else (including Barnouw) of how to think about American television as a cultural phenomenon. He offers no way to choose among the various intellectual slants on the medium people generally take. Indeed, at different moments he adopts all of them: television is escapist, television is propagandistic; television reflects what people are thinking, television tells people what to think; television is too commercial, the commercialism of television is inevitable; television is run by liberal élites, television is a pawn of politicians, television is the tool of corporate America. Anyone who reads "One Nation Under Television" might conclude that all these things are true in differing degrees, but it's precisely some help with the degrees that we want, and the book doesn't provide us with a very exact thermometer.

MacDonald is particularly impatient with American chauvinism and American capitalism, so that he writes in the manner of a person who has ceased being surprised at, but cannot help being continually disappointed by, television's generally pro-American and consumerist biases. He tends, in fact, to an exaggerated and rather dire view of those biases and their impact; "One Nation Under Television" is the sort of book that requires you, when you are reading it, to remind yourself occasionally that no one has ever been forced to watch a television show. MacDonald is inclined to chalk up everything meretricious or exploitative about American television to the economic system in which it flourishes—though it is pointless, of course, to blame everything that is wrong with television on capitalism, unless you are prepared to say that America has never produced any commercial culture worth caring about, which is something you would have to be culturally benumbed to believe. Still, where Smith, in the interests of keeping her subject vividly before us, asks us to think of what we watched in the network years as largely a function of personality—"the flickering images on CBS represented the soul and sensibility of Bill Paley," as she puts it—MacDonald's book reminds us that the style, the quality, the content, and even the color of network television programs were determined by forces much too strong for any personality, even an oversized one like Paley's, to have resisted.

Television, as MacDonald begins by observing, predates the Second World War. NBC started regular broadcasting in 1939, and although America's entry into the war delayed the development of national networks for several years, television technology had been quite fully explored by 1945. The return of the troops produced a massive potential audience and, for advertisers, massive consumer demand; and in 1948, when less than half a per cent of American households had television sets, national broadcasting made its real début.

Confronted with an industry poised to proliferate wildly and in need of



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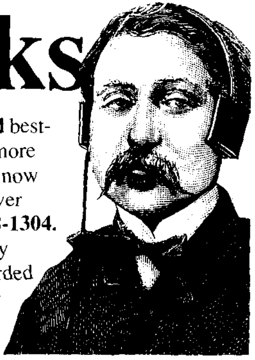

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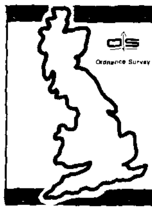

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elaborate technical coördination (standardization of signals and receivers, allocation of stations in the broadcast spectrum, and so on), the Federal Communications Commission imposed a freeze on the licensing of new television stations in September, 1948. The freeze turned out to be a kind of cultural Yalta; it lasted until 1952, by which time thirty-three per cent of American homes had television sets, and NBC and CBS, the companies that had dominated radio broadcasting, and whose affiliates had secured most of the television licenses granted before the freeze, essentially controlled the field—which, along with the less powerful ABC (a company created in 1943, after the government ordered NBC to sell one of its two radio networks), they continued to do for more than thirty years.

The man who had the most to say about the way in which television was to enter the culture, as Smith explains, was not Paley but Paley's rival, NBC's David Sarnoff. NBC was the broadcasting arm of RCA, of which Sarnoff was the president. RCA also had a manufacturing arm, which produced television sets—sets engineered, as it happened, to receive thirteen VHF channels and show a black-and-white picture. A color-picture technology had been developed by CBS in 1940; but Sarnoff, though he knew of this achievement, was not interested in color television. RCA had not pursued it, and CBS color was incompatible with RCA sets. In 1947, after Sarnoff promised that RCA was working on a color technology that could be used with its own sets, the F.C.C. refused to approve the CBS—or any other—color system. (Several months after the decision was announced, the F.C.C.'s chairman left to become a vice-president of RCA.) By 1953, when the commission lifted its ban on the manufacture of color sets, RCA, which had evidently *not* been working on a color picture, had flooded the market: there were twenty-three million black-and-white sets already in use.

The licensing freeze left the UHF market permanently underdeveloped. The networks' programs were designed to be broadcast on VHF, since their affiliates were VHF stations; and most sets could not receive UHF signals (which, incidentally, transmit color pictures better than VHF signals do). In 1953, the F.C.C. began licensing UHF stations, but television manufacturers were reluctant to equip their sets to receive the signal—as late as 1960, only seven per cent of the sets in the country had UHF reception—for the simple reason that many set manufacturers owned VHF broadcasting stations (which might possibly explain why the UHF dial was often such a nuisance to use).

Cable is a technology that predates broadcasting itself: transmitting electronic signals through wires is more rudimentary than transmitting them through the air (or through the ether, as the pioneers of radio imagined it). There were subscriber-supported cable systems for radio as early as 1923, and the television networks have always used coaxial cable, leased from phone companies, to transmit their pictures to broadcasting stations.

In short, almost the only technologies used by television in the nineties which could not have been used in the fifties are satellite transmission and the VCR, and even those are not recent inventions. Video recorders went on the market in 1957 (though they were expensive, and did not use cassettes), and Telstar, the first television satellite, was launched in 1962. (The networks undertook to control development in those areas, too, for obvious reasons.) What we might have had for the last forty years is what, in most parts of the country, we have now: a mixture of local and national programming and commercial-free pay services on several dozen channels—and all in living color.

THE danger to network broadcasting during the forty years of its supremacy was therefore always a clear and present one. Any politician who felt that his toes had been stepped on by a news show, any F.C.C. commissioner jealous of his high-mindedness, any President inclined to wage war against the "media establishment" might pull some regulatory stunt that would crack the industry wide open and let a hundred channels bloom. The networks made a lot of money in their day, but they looked over their shoulders all the way to the bank, because they never knew when the elaborate system of accommodations on which their fortunes had been built might collapse. Network television was constitutionally neurasthenic: the slightest potential change in its environment induced a precautionary frenzy.

The networks' commitment to news and other public-affairs programs, for instance, has historically been a function of their apprehension about government meddling: the higher the level of official concern in Washington about exploitative programming or monopolistic practices, the greater the number of shows designed to enlighten the public. Paley understood from the start the importance of maintaining a public-affairs profile: in 1931, all CBS press releases bore the slogan "Columbia—The News Network," even though, as Smith points out, CBS did not have a single news employee. CBS's reputation as a prestigious news organization, in other words, predated any actual news gathering.

Though it was desirable to be identified with a commitment to the news, the networks did not think it desirable to be identified with the sorts of controversies a genuine commitment to the news could create. By the accident that Edward R. Murrow, a CBS employee, was in Europe (though not as a reporter) when the Nazis entered Austria, CBS radio was able to carry dramatic firsthand coverage of the event. Murrow's radio broadcasts during the blitz (as noncontroversial a news event as one could hope for) made him a great celebrity, his fame helped promote the network, and CBS thus inadvertently began to acquire a prestigious news organization.

Paley made it a point not to socialize with his employees—even with Stanton —but Murrow, as Smith reports, was an exception, and after Murrow's return to New York at the end of the war the two men became friends. When, in 1954, Murrow undertook to broadcast two shows on Senator Joseph McCarthy on his news program "See It Now," though, Paley was careful to establish for his company what later executives would call "deniability." CBS refused, for instance, to buy newspaper advertisements for either of the McCarthy broadcasts; Murrow and his producer, Fred Friendly, had to pay for ads out of their own pockets (something Smith unaccountably fails to mention). And after the first show had been broadcast it was Babe, and not her husband, who placed the congratulatory call to Murrow. In the end, the response to the McCarthy broadcasts was favorable for CBS, but not universally so, and as Paley began to see the dangers that an unfettered investigative newsman invited he began quietly to shut Murrow and Friendly down. By 1958, "See It Now" was off the air. That same year, Murrow publicly criticized the networks for their "escapism," and he and Paley did not have a civil conversation again until just before Murrow's death, in 1965. As it turned out, in 1959 the quiz-show scandal, which had attracted the attention of the F.C.C., gave CBS a fresh reason for demonstrating its commitment to public affairs, and the network promptly unveiled a new investigative series, "CBS Reports."

The networks were anxious not just about politicians, of course. They were anxious about everybody. Advertisers might take offense: "There should be no statement or situation in conflict with One-A-Day multiple vitamins," decreed the advertising agency for Miles Laboratories. (Miles Laboratories was sponsoring "The Flintstones.") Powerful interest groups might take offense: for years, the American Medical Association advised the networks on medical dramas to insure that doctors were portrayed in a favorable light; and, according to MacDonald, the scripts, the casting, and the sponsorship of "The F.B.I.," which was on the air from 1965 to 1974, were overseen by (sensibly, for who would want to make those people unhappy?) the F.B.I. Then there were the self-appointed watchdog groups, like the National Television Review Board, based in Chicago, which in the mid-nineteen-fifties condemned "Howdy Doody" because it considered the show "loud," "confused," and "senseless" and the clown's role "too feminine."

The networks always had a headache, and each time they moved to cure the pain some other part of their vast constituency gave them a new one. Efforts to design programs appealing to eighteen-to-thirty-four-year-old women, beloved of advertisers, led, for example, to the relatively sexy and violent television fare of the mid-nineteen-seventies, which produced complaints from people who were (evidently) not eighteen-to-thirty-four-year-old women, and aroused the interest of the F.C.C. Panicked by the threat of regulation, the networks proposed a "Family Hour," agreeing to broadcast between seven and nine o'clock in the evening only programs appropriate for "family viewing." That appeased the F.C.C. but annoyed independent producers of "mature" shows, such as "All in the Family," which were being bumped to a later time. They sued the networks, and in 1976 a federal judge declared the Family Hour unconstitutional. It was enough to make anyone feel persecuted. When the networks pursued profits, they were told that the airwaves belonged to the public, and that their programming was not protected by the First Amendment; when they tried to regulate themselves in the name of the public interest, they were convicted of abridging freedom of speech.

When everyone must be pleased, even an autocrat can use some help, which is why, for instance, the creation of PBS was a welcome event for the networks: it excused them from the unremunerative duty of educating their audiences. The story of television programming in the network era is the story of what in another context might have seemed a utopian effort: the creation of something that millions of people would watch but that not a single person would feel offended by. No wonder that almost half of all new shows were off the air within a year; few things that are bland enough to pass the test of everyone's sensibility have much flavor left. It was like trying to reinvent milk.

You do not have to think well of the results to appreciate the ordeal that the quasi-monopolistic nature of the broadcasting business condemned the networks to. Here were enterprises that were operated on purely commercial principles but that could never seem cheap or sensational, that always had to give the appearance of being enlightened without ever taking a position on an issue on which people differed, that needed to attract the largest possible audience without being suspected of pandering. In those circumstances, it was obviously a great advantage to have at the head of the company a man as noted for his taste as William Paley. "I am not a highbrow," Paley once said. "I do not look down on popular taste. Oftentimes popular taste is my taste." It hardly mattered whether this was true. What mattered was that gov-

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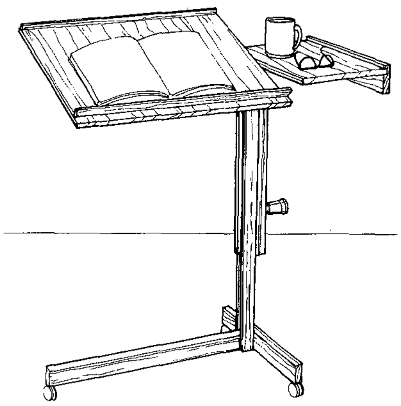

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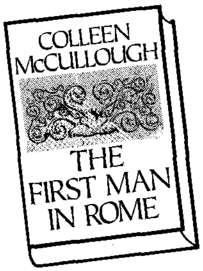

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ernment regulators and commercial sponsors were persuaded that the programs on CBS were compatible with the image Paley projected. A man who collected Picasso and Matisse, and whose wife was celebrated as one of the most fashionable women in the world, might be trusted not to offer the public shabby cultural goods. It was not egotism (or not merely egotism) that inspired Paley, even after he had ceased to make decisions about other matters, to play a conspicuous role in his company's yearly programming meetings. It was smart business.

In her biography of Paley Smith presents him as a world-shaper, but the details of his story make it plain that he was only a man ideally suited to an industry whose prosperity depended on slavish adherence to a standard of utterly respectable mindlessness. There are suggestions throughout "In All His Glory" that if we could somehow get to the bottom of Paley's personal feelings we would understand something important about our culture; but the most important thing about Paley's feelings—as the sad episode with Murrow shows—was how easily he could set them aside in order to obey the institutional imperatives of his business.

A note of disapproval runs through both Smith's and MacDonald's books on the network era, as it does through many books on television: "The networks never allowed television to be all it might have been," as MacDonald puts it. Though the problem quite clearly was too much regulation—tying up the industry in a way that prevented alternatives to the networks from developing—these writers would apparently have preferred more regulation still. Had the government been willing, in the early days of radio, to impose "tighter regulations on commercial operators," Smith suggests, "broadcasting might have been a tool for greater enlightenment"; and MacDonald echoes this sentiment many times. It is an easy chorus to join, for there is no doubt that television, considering its power to influence, has not been a particularly uplifting medium. But television's power to influence is just what makes one feel certain that active government interest in exploiting the medium's "educational" possibilities would have had regrettable consequences. In a way, the banality of network television was the best thing about it—just as the best thing about contemporary television is probably the sheer sensory confusion. Some powers are better left unchannelled.

The empire of the networks finally collapsed, at the end of the nineteen-eighties, in part because the pressure from rival technologies could no longer be resisted, but also because the networks lost the protection of the one federal regulation that seemed the most restrictive: the rule that the networks could own only seven television stations apiece. In 1985, in the deregulatory spirit of the Reagan era, the F.C.C. permitted each network to own up to twelve stations—which, since the ownership of a television station is, effectively, a license to print money, increased the networks' profitability and immediately made them candidates for takeovers. Paley's 1983 retirement had been a reluctant one, and some of the most engaging passages in Smith's book are devoted to a lengthy but lucid account of his conniving to regain at least the trappings of power. After Laurence A. Tisch, the head of the Loews Corporation, acquired a controlling interest in CBS in 1985, he and Paley orchestrated the removal of the man Paley had named as his successor, Thomas H. Wyman. In 1987, when Tisch assumed the presidency of CBS, Paley returned to the chairmanship, and he remained active in company affairs until his death, last fall, at the age of eighty-nine.

The power at CBS passed, though, to Tisch, who has proceeded, after the manner of most takeover victors, to sell off some of the spoils, getting rid of two of the company's divisions, CBS Records and CBS Publishing, for cash. The cash is being used by CBS to buy back a portion of its own stock—some of which belongs to Tisch, who has thus been able to recover much of his original investment, and some of which once belonged to Paley, whose estate reportedly needs the money to pay its taxes. All that remains of CBS is, essentially, the broadcasting network, which now must make its way in a world no longer disposed to respect the prerogatives of broadcasting networks, or to glorify their emperors.

—LOUIS MENAND

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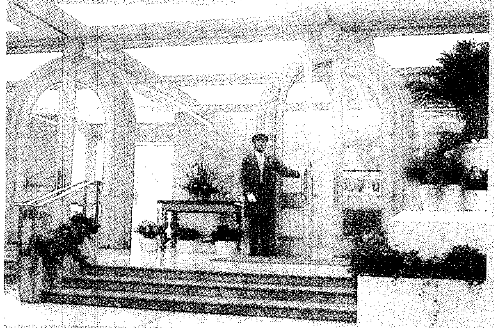

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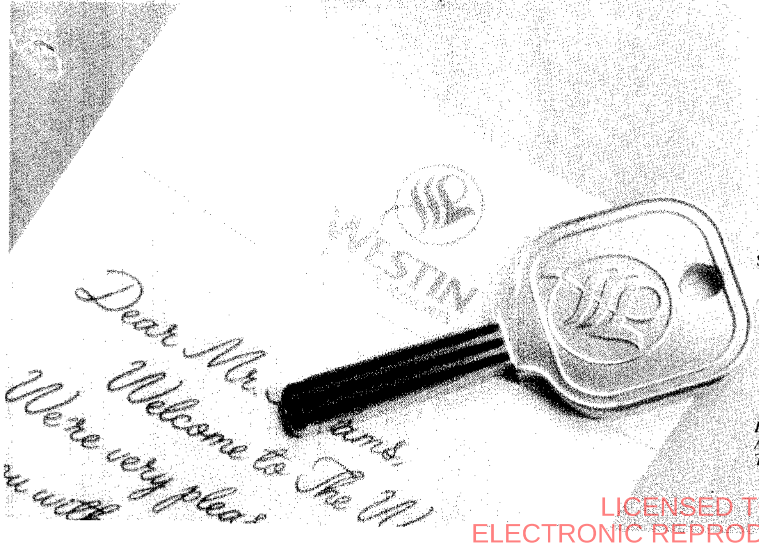

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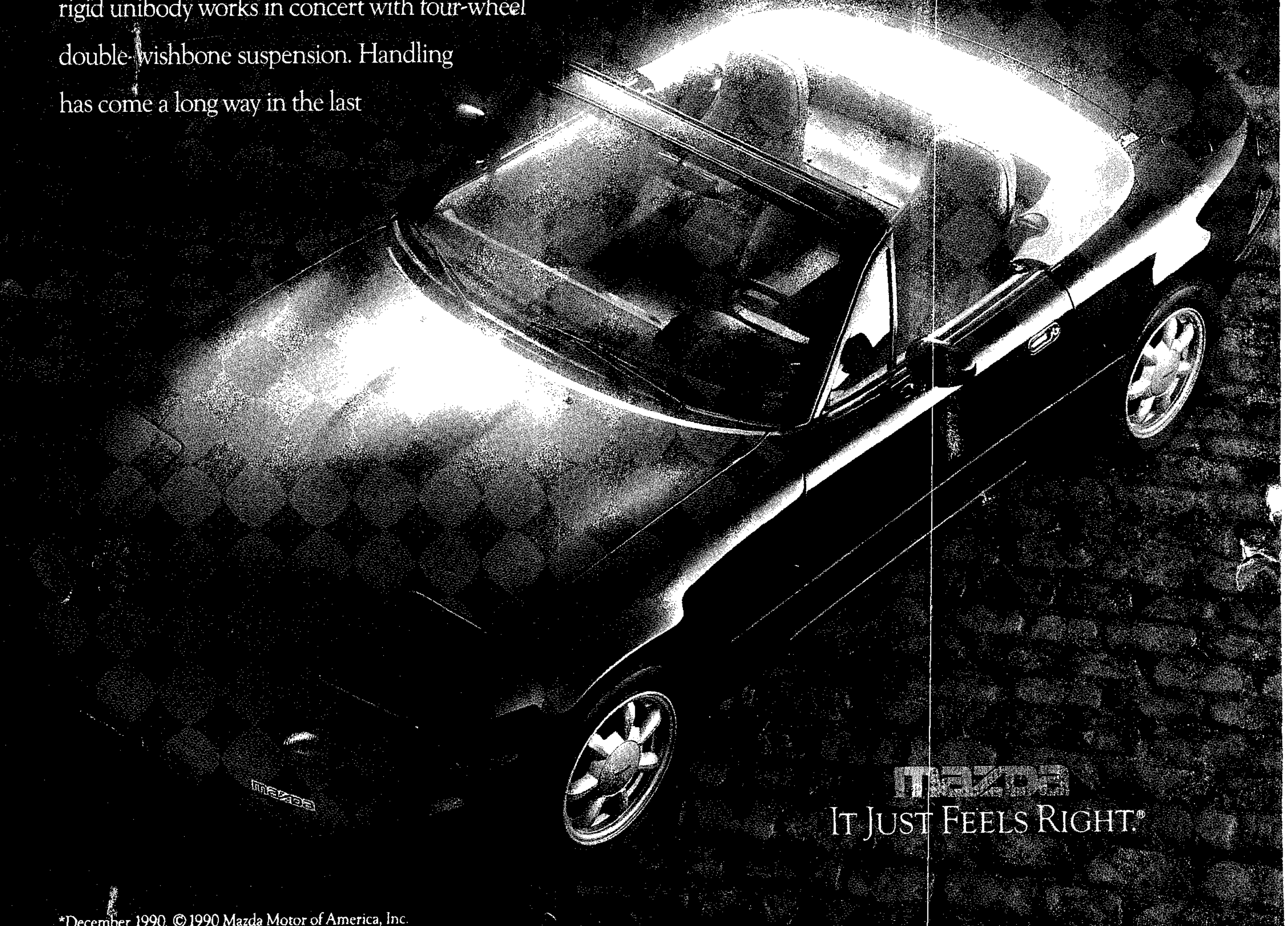

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